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## stability

**The embargo ruins Cuba’s economy – six reasons**

CETIM, 3 – European Center for the Third World, an independent research and political organization working at the UN (Centre Europe Tiers Monde, “THE EFFECTS OF THE US EMBARGO AGAINST CUBA AND THE REASONS OF THE URGENT NEED TO LIFT IT”, http://www.cetim.ch/oldsite/2003/03js04w4.htm)

\*Services and export prevention

\*Less commercial flows

\*No growth in goods and services

\*Opposition to integration into IFI’s

\*Social damages

\*Effects of emigration

The harmful economic effects of the embargo From an official Cuban source, the direct economic damages caused to Cuba by the US embargo since its institution would exceed 70 billion dollars. The damages include: 1) the loss of earnings due to the obstacles to the development of services and exportations (tourism, air transport, sugar, nickel; 2) the losses registered as a result of the geographic reorientation of the commercial flows, (additional costs of freight, stocking and commercialization at the purchasing of the goods…); 3) the impact of the limitation imposed on the growth of the national production of goods and services (limited access to technologies, lack of access to spare parts and hence early retirement of equipment, forced restructuring of firms, serious difficulties sustained by the sectors of sugar, electricity, transportation, agriculture…); 4) the monetary and financial restrictions (impossibility to renegotiate the external debt, interdiction of access to the dollar, unfavourable impact of the variation of the exchange rates on trade, "riskcountry", additional cost of financing due to US opposition to the integration of Cuba into the international financial institutions…); 5) the pernicious effects of the incentive to emigration, including illegal emigration (loss of human resources and talents generated by the Cuban educational system…); 6) social damages affecting the population (concerning food, health, education, culture, sport…). ! If it affects negatively all the sectors, the embargo directly impedes - besides the exportations - the driving forces of the Cuban economic recovery, at the top of which are tourism, foreign direct investments (FDI) and currency transfers. Many European subsidiaries of US firms had recently to break off negotiations for the management of hotels, because their lawyers anticipated that the contracts would be sanctioned under the provisions of the "Helms-Burton law". In addition, the buy-out by US groups of European cruising societies, which moored their vessels in Cuba, cancelled the projects in 2002-03. The obstacles imposed by the United States, in violation of the Chicago Convention on civil aviation, to the sale or the rental of planes, to the supply of kerosene and to access to new technologies (e-reservation, radio-localization), will lead to a loss of 150 million dollars in 2003. The impact on the FDI is also very unfavourable. The institutes of promotion of FDI in Cuba received more than 500 projects of cooperation from US companies, but none of them could be realized - not even in the pharmaceutical and biotechnological industry, where Cuba has a very attractive potential. The transfer of currencies from the United States is limited (less than 100 dollars a month per family) and some European banks had to restrain their commitment under the pressure of the US which let them know that indemnities would be required if the credits were maintained. In Cuba, the embargo penalizes the activities of the bank and finance, insurance, petrol, chemical products, construction, infrastructures and transports, shipyard, agriculture and fishing, electronics and computing…, but also for the export sectors (where the US property prevailed before 1959), such as those of sugar, whose recovery is impeded by the interdiction of access to the fist international stock exchange of raw materials (New York), of nickel, tobacco, rum.

**And it’s on the brink—**

**A) Inflationary pressures and lack of access to emergency financing**

Morris, 11 – London Metropolitan University (Emily, “FORECASTING CUBA’S ECONOMY: 2, 5, AND 20 YEARS”, Center for Western Hemisphere Studies at The Graduate Center/CUNY, April/May 2011, http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/bildn/cuba/cubaforecasting.pdf)

\*Inflation – monetary growth outstrip supply

\*Fiscal crises hurt reform

\*Dependent on Venezuela for financing

Risks in the short term Political risks arise from the process of transferring leadership from the old guard to a new generation. Evidently conscious of the hazards, the old guard are seeking to closely manage the generational handover, but their control will diminish. So far signs of dissent within the government have been rare and weak, but in 2011 the situation will begin to change radically. At the special conference of the PCC that will take place after the sixth PCC congress in April 2011, it seems likely that a new set of leaders will take up their posts. None of them will have the authority of the Castro brothers, and so for the first time for fifty years there is a possibility of the emergence of factionalism. In the TABLE 5. Two year forecast 2010 2011 2012 Real GDP (% growth) 2.1 3.5 4.2 Inflation (year-end, %)a a. This inflation figure is based on an estimated average household cost of living index that takes into account a reduction in the amount of basic goods available at heavily subsidised prices on the ration. The impact of the shift from subsidised consumption to market prices will vary widely between households, with the percentage rise in the cost of living being greater for those at the lower end of the income scale, who spend a higher proportion of their income on basic goods. 6.3 7.2 5.5 Average labour productivity (% growth) 4.2 5.9 4.5 Government spending/GDP ratio (%) 66.5 63.8 60.4 Investment/GDP ratio (%) 10.5 11.1 12.5Forecasting Cuba’s Economy: 2, 5, and 20 Years 13 context of the rapid changes taking place in the economic sphere, 2012 is likely to be a testing year. Despite its efforts to dampen expectations, there is a sense among the Cuban public that they should see material benefits from the economic reforms. If these hopes are dashed, the government could face a serious crisis of public confidence. In the economic sphere, there are many hazards arising from the process of transformation. There are risks that monetary growth will outstrip that of supply so that inflationary pressures could build, at a time when the government is losing its power to directly control prices. The extent to which the government will be able to manage the fiscal challenge it has set itself—to achieve sufficient savings and raise sufficient tax revenue to maintain welfare provision whilst phasing out the existing apparatus of social protection—will depend on its ability to respond quickly to difficulties as they arise. A major fiscal crisis would jeopardise the reform process, and hamper the government's ability to respond to social pressures created by the extensive realignment of relative incomes that will result from the changes. External risks are heightened by Cuba’s lack of access to emergency financing in the case of unanticipated shocks. The largest single risk comes from Cuba’s high degree of dependency on Venezuela, and in particular on earnings from the export of professional services. Hugo Chávez, on whom the relationship rests, does not face re-election until 2012 but if anything were to befall him before then, the Cuban economy would suffer. The high degree of uncertainty about the global economy also presents risks, with the recovery in OECD countries fragile and signs of strain within the economies of the growth leaders, China and India. 14 C

**B) Government mismanagement and new Venezuela policy – Maduro is scaling back involvement**

**French, 13** – Director for the U.S.-Cuba Policy Initiative at the New America Foundation, former Senior Fellow with the Lexington Institute (Anya Landau, “Can Cuba Survive the Loss of Chavez”, Havana Note, 3/6/13, http://thehavananote.com/node/1067) MDM

\*Reliance on Chavez – he just died

\*Maduro has a focus on domestic reforms – forcing Cuba to increase theirs

At the same time, it became clear to any honest observer inside or outside Cuba that the nation was headed for serious trouble; relying so singularly on the largesse of Hugo Chavez could have perilous consequences. When Raul Castro took the reins from his ailing older brother provisionally in 2006 and then formally in 2008, he focused, for the first time publicly, on the need for deep changes. The economic downturn of 2008, coming as it did with soaring world food prices and a punishing hurricane season (in which Cuba was walloped by four major storms that wipes out food stores and hundreds of thousands of homes), brought the reality starkly home.¶ The younger Castro’s rhetoric has been consistent and tough on economic mismanagement and corruption, but his apparent desire for consensus building (and avoiding destabilizing shocks that could jeopardize power) coupled with his inability to rein in a reluctant bureaucracy meant that Cuba’s economic restructuring has been slow and largely ineffectual – so far. Key reforms in real estate and migration, which offer many Cubans unprecedented potential economic empowerment and mobility, and also leverage an increasingly reconnected diaspora, offer hope of more and deeper reform, but other reforms, such as in expanding the non-state sector and reforming the tax code, have been too piecemeal or conservative so far.**¶** Not unsurprisingly, many in and out of Cuba now wonder if the loss of Chavez is the death knell of the Castros’ Revolution, or, perhaps could it inject urgent momentum into Raul Castro’s reform agenda, just in the nick of time? In some ways, the loss of Hugo Chavez, on its face so devastating for Cuba, might actually be a good thing for the island. With Nicolas Maduro a favorite to win the special presidential election a month from now, Cuba will likely retain significant influence. But Maduro is no Chavez. He’ll have to focus on building up his own political capital, without the benefit of Chavez’s charisma. While he surely won’t cut Cuba off, to maintain power he will almost certainly need to respond to increasing economic pressures at home with more pragmatic and domestically focused economic policies. And that likelihood, as well as the possibility that the Venezuelan opposition could win back power either now or in the medium term, should drive Cuban leaders to speed up and bravely deepen their tenuous economic reforms on the island. And if there was any hesitancy among Cuba's leaders to open more space between the island and Chavez, they now have the opportunity to do so. Under Raul Castro, Cuba has mended and expanded foreign relations the world over. Particularly if it shows greater pragmatism in its economic policies, countries such as China will no doubt increase economic engagement of the island.

**Normalized relations with Cuba are key to resolving structural issues in Cuba’s economy – Congressional action is necessary**

**Ashby, 13** – Senior Research Fellow at the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (Timothy, “Commentary: Preserving stability in Cuba after normalizing relations with the US”, Caribbean News Now, 4/1/13, http://www.caribbeannewsnow.com/headline-Commentary%3A-Preserving-stability-in-Cuba-after-normalizing-relations-with-the-US-15197.html) MDM

\*Chavez death cause social chaos amongst youth

\*Need to lift Helms-Burton with Congressional action

\*Bilateral trade creates economic stability

Cuba under Raúl Castro has entered a new period of economic, social, and political transformation. Reforms instituted within the past few years have brought the expansion of private sector entrepreneurial activity, including lifting restrictions on the sales of residential real estate, automobiles, and electronic goods. Additional reforms included, more than a million hectares of idle land has been leased to private farmers, where citizens have been granted permission to stay in hotels previously reserved for tourists, and freedom being granted for most Cubans to travel abroad. ¶ Stating that it was time for the “gradual transfer” of “key roles to new generations,” President Raúl Castro announced that he will retire by 2018, and named as his possible successor a man who was not even born at the time of the Cuban Revolution. [1]¶ The twilight of the Castro era presents challenges and opportunities for US policy makers. Normalization of relations is inevitable, regardless of timing, yet external and internal factors may accelerate or retard the process. ¶ The death of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez is likely to undermine the already dysfunctional Cuban economy, if it leads to reductions in oil imports and other forms of aid. This could bring social chaos, especially among the island’s disaffected youth. Such an outcome would generate adverse consequences for US national and regional security. To maintain Cuba’s social and economic stability while reforms are maturing, the United States must throw itself open to unrestricted bilateral trade with all Cuban enterprises, both private and state-owned.**¶** The collapse of Cuba’s tottering economy could seismically impact the United States and neighboring countries. It certainly did during the Mariel Boatlift of 1980, precipitated by a downturn in the Cuban economy which led to tensions on the island. Over 125,000 Cuban refugees landed in the Miami area, including 31,000 criminals and mental patients. Today, the United States defines its national security interests regarding Cuba as follows:¶ • Avoid one or more mass migrations;¶ • Prevent Cuba from becoming another porous border that allows continuous large-scale migration to the hemisphere;¶ • Prevent Cuba from becoming a major source or transshipment point for the illegal drug trade;¶ • Avoid Cuba becoming a state with ungoverned spaces that could provide a platform for terrorists and others wishing to harm the United States. [2]¶ All of these national security threats are directly related to economic and social conditions within Cuba.**¶** US policy specifically supports “a market-oriented economic system” [3] toward Cuba, yet regulations prohibit the importation of any goods of Cuban origin, whether from the island’s potentially booming private sector – including 300,000 agricultural producers – or State-Owned Enterprises (“SOEs”). [4] Such a policy is counterproductive to US interests. Regardless of over 400,000 entrepreneurs, including agricultural cultivators, it could be many years, if ever, when Cuba’s private sector would be ready to serve as the engine of economic growth. SOEs employ 72 percent of Cuban workers. [5] ¶ A rational commercial rapprochement towards Cuba would therefore require a change in current laws and in the system of regulations prohibiting the importation of Cuban goods and products. Normalized bilateral trade will benefit the Cuban people by helping to provide economic stability and fostering the growth of a middle class – both of which are essential for the foundation of democratic institutions. Two-way trade must include both Cuba’s private sector as well as SOEs.¶ Cuban SOEs are in a state of gradual transition like other parts of the economy. In December 2012, the Cuban government authorized a wide range of co-ops that will allow workers to collectively open new businesses or take over existing SOEs in construction, transportation, and other industries. Considered a pilot program that is a prime candidate for an expansion, the co-ops “will not be administratively subordinated to any state entity.” [6] ¶ Many Cuban officials, well aware of the limits to small-scale entrepreneurism, appear to harbor hope that co-ops could shift a large portion of the island’s economy to free-market competition from government-managed socialism. In other transitional states, particularly in post-socialist economies, co-ops have served as commercial bridges between state-owned and privatized business. Of the 300 largest co-ops in the world, more than half are in United States, Italy, or France. [7]¶ Ironically, the outputs of such co-ops, including agricultural products which could find strong demand in the American market, are barred by short-sighted federal regulations, thus hampering, if not defeating, what could be a major US policy goal.¶ The United States has been actively trading with foreign SOEs for years. China, a one party, communist state, is the United States’s second largest trading partner, and Chinese SOE’s account for a large percentage of the nearly $400 billion USD in goods exported to America each year. Venezuela is in the top fifteen of US trading partners, and the bulk of that country’s exports are petroleum products deriving from the state-owned PDVSA (which in turn owns Houston-based CITCO oil company). ¶ Another communist country, Vietnam – which initially was the subject of a US economic embargo similar to that imposed on Cuba – is the second largest source of US clothing imports and a major manufacturing source for footwear, furniture, and electrical machinery. [8] On these matters, the Cuban government has said that it wants to “replicate the paths of Vietnam and China.” [9]¶ Of relevance to Cuban trade relations, Vietnam has formally requested to be added to the US Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program as a “beneficiary developing country,” which authorizes the US president to grant duty-free treatment for eligible products. The statute also provides the president with specific political and economic criteria to use, when designating eligible countries and products. “Communist” countries are not eligible for GSP membership unless the president determines that certain conditions have been met, including whether the applicant is “dominated or controlled by international communism.” Furthermore, countries that fail to recognize “internationally accepted workers’ rights” are excluded. [10]¶ US statutes do not provide a general definition of a “communist” country, and the Obama administration is expected to declare that Vietnam is no longer “communist” in terms of its economic system. The argument will be that even if Vietnam is a “communist” country (hard to deny, considering it has one party government that is officially titled the Communist Party of Vietnam), it is “not dominated or controlled by international communism” because no such entity exists following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Similar arguments may be applied to Cuba in considering normalized relations with the United States.¶ At the request of the US Congress, the General Accounting Office (GAO) conducted detailed reviews of the frameworks for seven key statutes that govern Cuban sanctions. [11] The resulting reports concluded that (i) the president still maintains “broad discretion” to make additional modifications to Cuban sanctions; and (ii) prior measures, implemented by the executive branch have had the effect of easing specific restrictions of the Cuba sanctions and have been consistent with statutory mandates as well as within the discretionary authority of the president. [12] Some legal scholars assert that absence of such explicit statutory provisions in other areas suggests that Congress did not intend to prohibit the executive branch from issuing general or specific licenses to authorize certain transactions with Cuba when “such licenses are deemed to be appropriate and consistent with US policies.” [13]¶ Although a complex variety of federal statutes have re-stated the regulatory prohibition on importation of Cuban goods under 31 CFR § 515.204, enabling legislation to codify the restriction, has not been passed. For example, 22 USC § 6040(a) “notes” that 31 CFR § 515.204 prohibits the importation of goods from Cuba, but does not codify or expressly prohibit such activity, and 22 USC § 7028 acknowledges that Congress did not attempt to alter any prohibitions on the importation of goods from Cuba under 31 CFR § 515.204. [14]¶ The complete dismantling of the Cuban economic embargo will undoubtedly require congressional legislation; however, the president has broad powers to modify policy towards Cuba, particularly in an emergency situation that could affect US national security. [15] For example, imports of Cuban origin goods are prohibited under the Cuban Asset Control Regulations (“CACRS”) except as “specifically authorized by the Secretary of the Treasury by means of regulations, rulings, instructions, licenses or otherwise.” [16]¶ Such authority could allow the president to argue for the modification of 31 C.F.R. § 204’s complete prohibition on the importation of Cuban goods by stating that Cuban exports to the United States help the Cuban people by creating employment and thereby maintaining the island’s social stability. Considering the domestic political constituency and the political obduracy of US Congress, a more realistic presidential rationale for allowing Cuban imports from all types of enterprises could be the protection of US borders during an era of grave concerns about homeland security.**¶** Some policy analysts suggest that bilateral trade with Cuba should be restricted to businesses and individuals engaged in certifiably independent (i.e. non-state) economic activity. [17] While well-intentioned, such a policy would likely have a negligible impact on Cuba’s economic development and fails to recognize that commercial enterprises that the US government would classify as SOEs are actually co-ops or other types of quasi-independent entities that are in the early stages of privatization. Restrictions such as this also fail to address larger national and regional security concerns which are the primary responsibility of the president.¶ Although ultimately the Cuban people must freely choose their own political and economic systems, President Obama should be seen as having legal authority to support the transition taking place on the island by opening US markets to Cuban imports. Normalized bilateral trade will benefit the Cuban people and help to provide economic and social stability that is in turn vital to US national and regional security.**¶** Such trade must include both the island’s small, yet growing, private sector and State-Owned Enterprises. In this regard, it would be both unfair and strategically unwise to treat Cuba differently from its stated models, China and Vietnam.

**And, it entrenches long-term economic stability – current reform process is failing**

Piccone, 13 – Brookings Institute Senior Fellow and Deputy Director, Foreign Policy (Joseph, “Opening to Havana”, 1/17/13, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2013/01/opening-to-havana>)

\*Reform not igniting economy

\*No oil or gas drilling and agriculture damage now key to help econ

**\***Bilateral talks solve migration, trade and investment   
\*Current policy allows embargo as scapegoat

Under Raul Castro, the Cuban government has continued to undertake a number of important reforms to modernize its economy, lessen its dependence on Hugo Chavez’s Venezuela, and allow citizens to make their own decisions about their economic futures. The process of reform, however, is gradual, highly controlled and short on yielding game-changing results that would ignite the economy. Failure to tap new offshore oil and gas fields and agricultural damage from Hurricane Sandy dealt further setbacks. Independent civil society remains confined, repressed and harassed, and strict media and internet controls severely restrict the flow of information. The Castro generation is slowly handing power over to the next generation of party and military leaders who will determine the pace and scope of the reform process. These trends suggest that an inflection point is approaching and that now is the time to try a new paradigm for de-icing the frozen conflict. The embargo — the most complex and strictest embargo against any country in the world — has handcuffed the United States and has prevented it from having any positive influence on the island’s developments. It will serve American interests better to learn how to work with the emerging Cuban leaders while simultaneously ramping up direct U.S. outreach to the Cuban people. I recommend that your administration, led by a special envoy appointed by you and reporting to the secretary of state and the national security advisor, open a discreet dialogue with Havana on a wide range of issues, without preconditions. The aim of the direct bilateral talks would be to resolveoutstanding issues around migration, travel, counterterrorism and counternarcotics, the environment, and trade and investmentthat are important to protecting U.S. national interests. Outcomes of these talks could include provisions that normalize migration flows, strengthen border security, break down the walls of communication that hinder U.S. ability to understand how Cuba is changing, and help U.S. businesses create new jobs. In the context of such talks your special envoy would be authorized to signal your administration’s willingness to remove Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism, pointing to its assistance to the Colombian peace talks as fresh evidence for the decision. This would remove a major irritant in U.S.-Cuba relations, allow a greater share of U.S.-sourced components and services in products that enter Cuban commerce, and free up resources to tackle serious threats to the homeland from other sources like Iran. We should also consider authorizing payments for exports to Cuba through financing issued by U.S. banks and granting a general license to allow vessels that have entered Cuban ports to enter U.S. ports without having to wait six months. You can also facilitate technical assistance on market-oriented reforms from international financial institutions by signaling your intent to drop outright opposition to such moves. Under this chapeau of direct talks, your administration can seek a negotiated solution to the thorny issue of U.S. and Cuban citizens serving long prison sentences, thereby catalyzing progress toward removing a major obstacle to improving bilateral relations. You should, in parallel, also take unilateral steps to expand direct contacts with the Cuban people by: • authorizing financial and technical assistance to the burgeoning class of small businesses and cooperatives and permitting Americans to donate and trade in goods and services with those that are certified as independent entrepreneurs, artists, farmers, professionals and craftspeople; • adding new categories for general licensed travel to Cuba for Americans engaged in services to the independent economic sector, e.g., law, real estate, insurance, accounting, financial services; • granting general licenses for other travelers currently authorized only under specific licenses, such as freelance journalists, professional researchers, athletes, and representatives of humanitarian organizations and private foundations; • increasing or eliminating the cap on cash and gifts that non- Cuban Americans can send to individuals, independent businesses and families in Cuba; • eliminating the daily expenditure cap for U.S. citizens visiting Cuba and removing the prohibition on the use of U.S. credit and bank cards in Cuba; • authorizing the reestablishment of ferry services to Cuba; • expanding the list of exports licensed for sale to Cuba, including items like school and art supplies, athletic equipment, water and food preparation systems, retail business machines, and telecommunications equipment (currently allowed only as donations). The steps recommended above would give your administration the tools to have a constructive dialogue with the Cuban government based on a set of measures that 1) would engage Cuban leaders in high-level, face-to-face negotiations on matters that directly serve U.S. interests in a secure, stable, prosperous and free Cuba; and 2) allow you to assert executive authority to take unilateral steps that would increase U.S. support to the Cuban people, as mandated by Congress. To take this step, you will have to contend with negative reactions from a vocal, well-organized minority of members of Congress who increasingly are out of step with their constituents on this issue. Your initiative should be presented as a set of concrete measures to assist the Cuban people, which is well within current congressional mandates, and as a way to break the stalemate in resolving the case of U.S. citizen Alan Gross (his wife is calling for direct negotiations). Those are winnable arguments. But you will need to be prepared for some unhelpful criticism along the way. ¶ **Conclusion:** ¶Current U.S. policy long ago outlived its usefulness and is counterproductive to advancing the goal of helping the Cuban people. Instead it gives Cuban officials the ability to demonize the United States in the eyes of Cubans, other Latin Americans and the rest of the world, which annually condemns the embargo at the United Nations. At this rate, given hardening attitudes in the region against U.S. policy, the Cuba problem may even torpedo your next presidential Summit of the Americas in Panama in 2015. It is time for a new approach: an initiative to test the willingness of the Cuban government to engage constructively alongside an effort to empower the Cuban people.

**Cuban economic collapse causes a refugee crisis, incapacitates U.S. deterrence, and exacerbates hotspots**

Gorrell, 5 – Lieutenant Colonel (Tim, “CUBA: THE NEXT UNANTICIPATED ANTICIPATED STRATEGIC CRISIS?”, 3/18/05, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA433074>)zs

Regardless of the succession, under the current U.S. policy, Cuba’s problems of a post Castro transformation only worsen. In addition to Cubans on the island, there will be those in exile who will return claiming authority. And there are remnants of the dissident community within Cuba who will attempt to exercise similar authority. A power vacuum or absence of order will create the conditions for instability and civil war. Whether Raul or another successor from within the current government can hold power is debatable. However, that individual will nonetheless extend the current policies for an indefinite period, which will only compound the Cuban situation. When Cuba finally collapses anarchy is a strong possibility if the U.S. maintains the “wait and see” approach. The U.S. then must deal with an unstable country 90 miles off its coast. In the midst of this chaos, thousands will flee the island. During the Mariel boatlift in 1980 125,000 fled the island.26 Many were criminals; this time the number could be several hundred thousand fleeing to the U.S., creating a refugee crisis.¶ Equally important, by adhering to a negative containment policy, the U.S. may be creating its next series of transnational criminal problems. Cuba is along the axis of the drug-trafficking flow into the U.S. from Columbia. The Castro government as a matter of policy does not support the drug trade. In fact, Cuba’s actions have shown that its stance on drugs is more than hollow rhetoric as indicated by its increasing seizure of drugs – 7.5 tons in 1995, 8.8 tons in 1999, and 13 tons in 2000.27 While there may be individuals within the government and outside who engage in drug trafficking and a percentage of drugs entering the U.S. may pass through Cuba, the Cuban government is not the path of least resistance for the flow of drugs. If there were no Cuban restraints, the flow of drugs to the U.S. could be greatly facilitated by a Cuba base of operation and accelerate considerably.¶ In the midst of an unstable Cuba, the opportunity for radical fundamentalist groups to operate in the region increasesa. If these groups can export terrorist activity from Cuba to the U.S. or throughout the hemisphere then the war against this extremism gets more complicated. Such activity could increase direct attacks and disrupt the economies, threatening the stability of the fragile democracies that are budding throughout the region. In light of a failed state in the region, the U.S. may be forced to deploy military forces to Cuba, creating the conditions for another insurgency. The ramifications of this action could very well fuel greater anti-American sentiment throughout the Americas. A proactive policy now can mitigate these potential future problems.¶ U.S. domestic political support is also turning against the current negative policy. The Cuban American population in the U.S. totals 1,241,685 or 3.5% of the population.28 Most of these exiles reside in Florida; their influence has been a factor in determining the margin of victory in the past two presidential elections. But this election strategy may be flawed, because recent polls of Cuban Americans reflect a decline for President Bush based on his policy crackdown. There is a clear softening in the Cuban-American community with regard to sanctions. Younger Cuban Americans do not necessarily subscribe to the hard-line approach. These changes signal an opportunity for a new approach to U.S.-Cuban relations. (Table 1)¶ The time has come to look realistically at the Cuban issue. Castro will rule until he dies. The only issue is what happens then? The U.S. can little afford to be distracted by a failed state 90 miles off its coast. The administration, given the present state of world affairs, does not have the luxury or the resources to pursue the traditional American model of crisis management. The President and other government and military leaders have warned that the GWOT will be long and protracted. These warnings were sounded when the administration did not anticipate operations in Iraq consuming so many military, diplomatic and economic resources. There is justifiable concern that Africa and the Caucasus region are potential hot spots for terrorist activity, so these areas should be secure. North Korea will continue to be an unpredictable crisis in waiting. We also cannot ignore China. What if China resorts to aggression to resolve the Taiwan situation? Will the U.S. go to war over Taiwan? Additionally, Iran could conceivably be the next target for U.S. pre-emptive action. These6 are known and potential situations that could easily require all or many of the elements of national power to resolve. In view of such global issues, can the U.S. afford to sustain the status quo and simply let the Cuban situation play out? The U.S. is at a crossroads: should the policies of the past 40 years remain in effect with vigor? Or should the U.S. pursue a new approach to Cuba in an effort to facilitate a manageable transition to post-Castro Cuba?

**Hotspot escalation goes nuclear**

**Bosco, 6** – senior editor at Foreign Policy magazine (David, “Forum: Keeping an eye peeled for World War III”, 7/30/06, http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/opinion/perspectives/forum-keeping-an-eye-peeled-for-world-war-iii-444141/)

The understanding that small but violent acts can spark global conflagration is etched into the world's consciousness. The reverberations from Princip's shots in the summer of 1914 ultimately took the lives of more than 10 million people, shattered four empires and dragged more than two dozen countries into war. This hot summer, as the world watches the violence in the Middle East, the awareness of peace's fragility is particularly acute. The bloodshed in Lebanon appears to be part of a broader upsurge in unrest. Iraq is suffering through one of its bloodiest months since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. Taliban militants are burning schools and attacking villages in southern Afghanistan as the United States and NATO struggle to defend that country's fragile government. Nuclear-armed India is still cleaning up the wreckage from a large terrorist attack in which it suspects militants from rival Pakistan. The world is awash in weapons, North Korea and Iran are developing nuclear capabilities, and long-range missile technology is spreading like a virus. Some see the start of a global conflict. "We're in the early stages of what I would describe as the Third World War," former House Speaker Newt Gingrich said recently. Certain religious Web sites are abuzz with talk of Armageddon. There may be as much hyperbole as prophecy in the forecasts for world war. But it's not hard to conjure ways that today's hot spots could ignite. Consider the following scenarios: Targeting Iran: As Israeli troops seek out and destroy Hezbollah forces in southern Lebanon, intelligence officials spot a shipment of longer-range Iranian missiles heading for Lebanon. The Israeli government decides to strike the convoy and Iranian nuclear facilities simultaneously. After Iran has recovered from the shock, Revolutionary Guards surging across the border into Iraq, bent on striking Israel's American allies. Governments in Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia face violent street protests demanding retribution against Israel -- and they eventually yield, triggering a major regional war. Missiles away: With the world's eyes on the Middle East, North Korea's Kim Jong Il decides to continue the fireworks show he began earlier this month. But this time his brinksmanship pushes events over the brink. A missile designed to fall into the sea near Japan goes astray and hits Tokyo, killing a dozen civilians. Incensed, the United States, Japan's treaty ally, bombs North Korean missile and nuclear sites. North Korean artillery batteries fire on Seoul, and South Korean and U.S. troops respond. Meanwhile, Chinese troops cross the border from the north to stem the flow of desperate refugees just as U.S. troops advance from the south. Suddenly, the world's superpower and the newest great power are nose to nose. Loose nukes: Al-Qaida has had Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in its sights for years, and the organization finally gets its man. Pakistan descends into chaos as militants roam the streets and the army struggles to restore order. India decides to exploit the vacuum and punish the Kashmir-based militants it blames for the recent Mumbai railway bombings. Meanwhile, U.S. special operations forces sent to secure Pakistani nuclear facilities face off against an angry mob. The empire strikes back: Pressure for democratic reform erupts in autocratic Belarus. As protesters mass outside the parliament in Minsk, president Alexander Lukashenko requests Russian support. After protesters are beaten and killed, they appeal for help, and neighboring Poland -- a NATO member with bitter memories of Soviet repression -- launches a humanitarian mission to shelter the regime's opponents. Polish and Russian troops clash, and a confrontation with NATO looms. As in the run-up to other wars, there is today more than enough tinder lying around to spark a great power conflict. The question is how effective the major powers have become at managing regional conflicts and preventing them from escalating. After two world wars and the decades-long Cold War, what has the world learned about managing conflict? The end of the Cold War had the salutary effect of dialing down many regional conflicts. In the 1960s and 1970s, every crisis in the Middle East had the potential to draw in the superpowers in defense of their respective client states. The rest of the world was also part of the Cold War chessboard. Compare the almost invisible U.N. peacekeeping mission in Congo today to the deeply controversial mission there in the early 1960s. (The Soviets were convinced that the U.N. mission was supporting a U.S. puppet, and Russian diplomats stormed out of several Security Council meetings in protest.) From Angola to Afghanistan, nearly every Cold War conflict was a proxy war. Now, many local crises can be handed off to the humanitarians or simply ignored. But the end of the bipolar world has a downside. In the old days, the two competing superpowers sometimes reined in bellicose client states out of fear that regional conflicts would escalate. Which of the major powers today can claim to have such influence over Tehran or Pyongyang? Today's world has one great advantage: None of the leading powers appears determined to reorder international affairs as Germany was before both world wars and as Japan was in the years before World War II. True, China is a rapidly rising power -- an often destabilizing phenomenon in international relations -- but it appears inclined to focus on economic growth rather than military conquest (with the possible exception of Taiwan). Russia is resentful about its fall from superpower status, but it also seems reconciled to U.S. military dominance and more interested in tapping its massive oil and gas reserves than in rebuilding its decrepit military. Indeed, U.S. military superiority seems to be a key to global stability. Some theories of international relations predict that other major powers will eventually band together to challenge American might, but it's hard to find much evidence of such behavior. The United States, after all, invaded Iraq without U.N. approval and yet there was not even a hint that France, Russia or China would respond militarily.

**Cuban migration crises divert Coast Guard focus and resources, gutting mission effectiveness**

**Thale, 8** – Program Director at the Washington Office on Latin America (Geoff, “Opting for Engagement”, Washington Office on Latin America, April 2008, http://www.wola.org/sites/default/files/downloadable/Cuba/past/Opting%20for%20Engagement.pdf) SJF

Others moved more by humanitarian concern than by politics, could try to return to Cuba to pick up relatives eager to leave the island, at a time when they are less likely to be stopped by the Cuban military, which will be pre-occupied with the succession. ¶ It is thus easy to imagine a relatively chaotic scenario in which Cuban-Americans in boats or small planes, attempt to return to Cuba at the time of a definitive succession. This is a recipe for disaster. Most Cuban citizens, whatever they may think of the Castro government, are not eager to see exiles who left over forty years ago return to take over the country. The Cuban government and the Cuban military would see any large scale attempt to return as a political challenge and a national security threat. Conflict, in which U.S. citizens were arrested, or hurt, or killed, would be likely, and that would be very dangerous, as it would threaten to bring both governments into confrontation.¶ In part because of this scenario, the U.S. Coast Guard has, for many years, had standing orders to prevent small boats from leaving South Florida and heading toward Cuba in the period immediately after Castro’s death or departure. This is a simple and common sense measure, designed to prevent uncontrolled movement that could generate a crisis at an already tense moment. Whether the Bush Administration and subsequent U.S. governments maintain this order, and assure that the Coast Guard fully and effectively implements it, is a major issue. It is an encouraging sign that the both federal and Florida state authorities made a serious and effective effort to dissuade Cuban exiles and Cuban-Americans from trying to return to Cuba in the days after the temporary transfer of power in 2006.¶ If one risk has to do with Cuban-Americans heading toward Cuba after Fidel Castro’s death, another risk has to do with rafters leaving Cuba. If the succession in Cuba were to be less stable than expected, an exodus of Cubans could take place with significant numbers of rafters heading toward Florida. The hardline community in Miami would likely contribute to this exodus through its radio stations and other contacts in Cuba, encouraging people to take advantage of a relatively weak government and border patrol. This would present difficult political choices for the U.S. government. A significant exodus would overwhelm U.S. resources and produce a huge political backlash in the United States (which is already in the midst of a polarized immigration debate), while measures to prevent Cubans from reaching U.S. soil would probably require military force and be politically costly in the hardline Cuban-American community. Even if the United States prevents boats from heading for Cuba, and can prevent a rafter crisis, under current policy it will still face a number of other issues in how it responds to Fidel’s departure from the scene. The Helms-Burton Law, passed in 1996, requires a set of changes in Cuba before the United States can normalize relations or extend economic assistance to Cuba. This severely limits the scope of potential action for the current and future administrations. The Bush Administration has made it clear that it wants to see significant political and economic change in Cuba as a precondition for improved relations. And, as noted earlier, hardline sectors envision offering to ease the embargo in return for these changes in Cuba. This hardline position is unlikely to achieve results. Assuming that the successor government has come into office, and that a rafter and emigration crisis has been avoided, no post-Castro government is likely to abandon the nationalism and independence that have been the hallmark of Cuban policy for nearly five decades in return for negotiations on U.S. terms. While the Cuban government may feel the need to take economic measures designed to boost popular support, it will not be in such difficult economic circumstances that it will be desperate for U.S. aid, or tourism, or trade to keep it afloat. In fact, U.S. demands for political and economic change are likely to provide the government an opportunity to rally public support in nationalist opposition to U. S. interference. Thus the United States will be doomed to continued irrelevance.

**Effective Coast Guard is key to solve a laundry list of impacts**

**Papp, 12** – United States Coast Guard admiral and the 24th and current Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard (Robert J., Jr., “Coast Guard Publication 3-0: Operations”, U.S. Coast Guard, 2/21/12, http://www.uscg.mil/doctrine/CGPub/CG\_Pub\_3\_0.pdf, pg. 4-8) EK

\*Terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal immigration, military readiness, scientific development, marine biodiversity, overfishing, and oil spills

2.2 Protect Against Threats Delivered by Sea 2.2.1 Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security The Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security (PWCS) mission protects people and property in the MTS by preventing, disrupting, and responding to terrorist attacks, sabotage, espionage, or subversive acts. PWCS establishes and oversees maritime security regimes in the coastal and inland operational areas and is enforced through Maritime Security and Response Operations (MSRO). Activities under PWCS include preparedness planning and exercises, initiatives to enhance the resilience of maritime Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CIKR) and the MTS, the execution of antiterrorism and counterterrorism activities, and initial recovery efforts after attacks. PWCS especially relies upon the Coast Guard’s broad authorities and long standing partnerships with governmental, maritime industry, and international partners. PWCS activities are primarily directed by Coast Guard Sector commanders assigned as the Federal Maritime Security Coordinators (FMSC) for the 361 maritime ports in the U.S. 2.2.2 Drug Interdiction The Drug Interdiction mission reduces the supply of illegal drugs to the U.S. by disrupting the maritime flow of illegal drugs through at-sea interdiction and seizure of smuggling vessels carrying contraband in the maritime transit zone, typically in the offshore area far from the U.S. Coast Guard cutters and aircraft patrol the high seas and provide persistent presence to support detection and monitoring, interdiction and apprehension activities. The Coast Guard relies on joint, interagency, and international partnerships to conduct drug interdiction. 2.2.3 Migrant Interdiction The Migrant Interdiction mission enforces U.S. immigration laws and international conventions against human smuggling through at-sea interdiction and rapid repatriation of undocumented migrants attempting the reach the U.S. The Coast Guard accomplishes this mission in conjunction with other Federal, state, and local agencies, including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, and the Department of State. In support of this mission, the Coast Guard engages partner nations by supporting their efforts to enhance their border control and maritime law enforcement capabilities. While executing this mission, Coast Guard priorities include ensuring safety of life at sea and upholding the human dignity of migrants interdicted at sea. 2.2.4 Defense Readiness Under Title 14 U.S.C. § 1, the Coast Guard is “at all times an armed force of the United States.” As part of the Joint Force, the Coast Guard maintains its readiness to carry out military operations in support of the policies and objectives of the U.S. government. The Defense Readiness mission supports the National Military Strategy and Department of Defense (DoD) operations by ensuring Coast Guard assets are capable and equipped to deploy and conduct joint operations in support the most critical needs of the combatant commanders in the following major national-defense missions: Maritime interception/interdiction operations Military environmental response Port operations, security, and defense Theater security cooperation Coastal sea control operations Rotary-Wing Air Intercept (RWAI) operations Combating terrorism operations Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) support 2.3 Protect the Sea Itself 2.3.1 Ice Operations The Coast Guard conducts icebreaking operations in the polar regions and domestically. Polar Operations The Polar Operations mission is conducted to provide assured surface access to ice-covered and ice-diminished waters in the polar regions in support of U.S. strategic objectives and for response to all-hazard contingencies. Polar Operations are conducted to: Protect United States sovereignty by providing the capability and resources necessary to carry out and support national interests in the polar regions; and Assist other governmental and scientific organizations in the pursuit of science activities.  The Coast Guard maintains the Nation’s only polar icebreaking capability.  Domestic Icebreaking  The Domestic Icebreaking mission is conducted to facilitate commercial navigation and commerce in the inland and coastal operational areas, prevent flooding caused by ice, and enable search and rescue in icebound areas.  The Coast Guard is mandated to keep open to navigation, in so far as practicable, channels and harbors to support the reasonable demands of commerce. Domestic icebreaking ensures a regular navigation season on the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence Seaway, and the northeast U.S. coast.  International Ice Patrol  The Coast Guard conducts International Ice Patrol operations in the offshore operational area to monitor and warn mariners of iceberg danger near the Grand Banks of Newfoundland in the Atlantic Ocean. 2.3.2 Aids to Navigation and Waterways Management The Aids to Navigation (ATON) and Waterways Management mission is conducted to maintain a safe and efficient navigable waterways system needed to: Support domestic commerce; Facilitate international trade; and Ensure access for the military sealift fleet required for national defense. The Coast Guard maintains the “signposts” and “traffic signals” (more than 50,000 Federal aids to navigation, including buoys, lighthouses, day beacons, and radio-navigation signals) on the nation’s waterways. The Coast Guard operates Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) in key ports and waterways to coordinate the safe movement of commercial vessels. The Coast Guard regulates approximately 18,000 highway and railroad bridges that span navigable waterways throughout the Nation, issuing permits for bridge construction, ordering obstructive bridges to be removed, and overseeing drawbridge operations. 2.3.3 Marine Environmental Protection The Marine Environmental Protection mission is conducted to reduce the risk of harm to the maritime environment by developing and enforcing regulations to prevent and respond to oil and hazardous substance spills in the marine environment, prevent the introduction of invasive species into the maritime environment, and prevent unauthorized ocean dumping. In accordance with the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), the Coast Guard is responsible for pre-designating the Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC) for maritime pollution incidents. The Coast Guard responds to oil and hazardous substance incidents in the inland, coastal, and offshore operational areas, including overseeing, directing and/or conducting response operations. 2.3.4 Living Marine Resources (LMR) The Living Marine Resources (LMR) mission is conducted to support conservation and management of living marine resources and their environment, to include protected species, protected areas, and critical habitats. LMR mission activities include boarding of commercial fishing vessels and enforcement of LMR laws and regulations in the inland, coastal, and offshore operational areas. In partnership with other Federal agencies, foreign governments and international authorities, the Coast Guard enforces compliance with international agreements to deter illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing activity. 2.3.5 Other Law Enforcement The Other Law Enforcement (OLE) mission is conducted to protect U.S. natural resources in the maritime domain, such as fish stocks, against illegal incursions by foreign fishing vessels. The United States has sovereign rights over all living and nonliving resources within its EEZ, which encompasses more than 3.4 million square miles of waters within 200 nautical miles of U.S. coastline. To accomplish this task, the Coast Guard deploys assets to monitor and patrol the U.S. EEZ in the coastal and offshore operational areas.

## cooperation

**Unilateralism fails – it causes power dilution, small state backlash, economic multipolarity, trading blocs, and great power wars**

**Kupchan, 12** – Ph.D. in international relations from Oxford, Associate Professor of International Relations at Georgetown, Senior Fellow and Director of Europe Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations (Charles, “Sorry, Mitt: It Won't Be an American Century”, Foreign Policy, 2/6/12, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/06/it\_won\_t\_be\_an\_american\_century?page=0,2)

\*Economic multipolarity – China experienced decade of explosive growth – new economic power; dollar, renminbi and euro will be equal

\*Overreach – 46% of Americans want U.S. to focus inwardly means less support and shrinking defense budget forces U.S. to pick fights decreasing power influence

In an election season, such talk rolls easily off the tongue. But Romney's hackneyed rhetoric is woefully out of step -- both with an American electorate hungry for a less costly brand of foreign policy and with a world in the midst of tectonic change. A sharp **economic downturn** and **expensive, inconclusive conflicts** in Iraq and Afghanistan have left Americans ready for a focus on the home front. Abroad, the charge for the next U.S. president can hardly be to stick his head in the sand and deny that the global distribution of power is fast changing. On the contrary, it is to react soberly and steadily to the implications of such change and ensure that the United States remains secure and prosperous even as economic and military strength spreads to new quarters.¶ President Barack Obama is on the correct path. Leaving Iraq and overseeing a paced withdrawal from Afghanistan will bring U.S. commitments back into line with U.S. interests. Special operations and drone strikes have proved far more effective in fighting al Qaeda than has occupying countries in the Middle East and South Asia, and an offshore posture in the Persian Gulf is the best way to deal with Iran. Amid **China's rise** and the **economic dynamism** building in its neighborhood, Obama is right to downsize the U.S. presence in Europe and orchestrate a strategic "pivot" to East Asia. The move constitutes a necessary hedge against Chinese ambition and ensures that American workers will benefit from expanding markets in the Pacific Rim. These policies will enable the United States to simultaneously adjust to a shifting global landscape, husband its resources, and grow its economy -- facilitating the president's pledge to focus on "nation-building here at home."¶ Romney has already denigrated Obama's pragmatism, charging that "our president thinks America is in decline." Obama shot back in his State of the Union address on Jan. 24 that "anyone who tells you that America is in decline … doesn't know what they're talking about." Obama decidedly has the upper hand in this back-and-forth. He recognizes that, the country's strengths notwithstanding, U.S. strategy must adjust to a world in which power will be more broadly distributed. And his focus on rebuilding the American economy speaks directly to an electorate yearning for more equity and prosperity at home.¶ According to a recent Pew Research Center survey, **46 percent of Americans** want the United States to "mind its own business," and 76 percent think the country should "concentrate more on our own national problems" than on foreign challenges. These are high numbers by historical standards -- a clear indication that the **electorate** is hurting economically and wary of **strategic overreach**. Romney should take note. His chest-thumping talk of a new American century still plays well in some quarters. But Obama's commitment to nation-building at home will play even better.¶ Even if Romney's rhetoric were to get more domestic traction, it would still bear no resemblance to the new global landscape that is fast emerging. The United States is indeed an exceptional nation -- in its prized geographic location, commitment to freedom and democracy, and brand of international leadership. But the country's exceptionalism should not be used as an excuse to hide from global realities.¶ China's GDP will catch up with America's over the course of the next decade. The World Bank predicts that the dollar, euro, and China's renminbi will become co-equals in a "multi-currency" monetary system by 2025. Goldman Sachs expects the collective GDP of the top four developing countries -- Brazil, China, India, and Russia -- to match that of the G-7 countries by 2032. The United States will no doubt exit the current slump and bounce back economically in the years ahead. Nonetheless, a more level global playing field is inevitable.¶ To be sure, America's military superiority will remain second to none for decades to come. As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have made amply clear, though, military primacy hardly ensures effective influence. And with the **U.S. defense budget poised to shrink** in the service of restoring the country's fiscal health, the United States will have to pick its fights carefully. Shrewd and judicious statecraft will be at least as important as raw power in ensuring the country's security.¶ To acknowledge the need for the United States to adjust to prospective shifts in the global distribution of power is not, as Duke University professor Bruce Jentleson recently pointed out in Democracy, to be a declinist or a pessimist. It is to be a realist. And safely guiding the United States through this coming transition requires seeing the world as it is rather than retreating toward the illusory comfort of denial.¶ Adjusting to the rise of the rest requires, for starters, making more room at the table for newcomers. That process is already well under way. The G-20 has supplanted the G-8, widening the circle for global consultations. In the aftermath of reforms adopted in 2010, developing countries now have enhanced weight at the World Bank and IMF. The enlargement of the U.N. Security Council, though currently bogged down in wrangling, is also in the offing.¶ But making international institutions more representative is the easy part. More challenging will be managing the ideological diversity that will accompany the coming realignment in global power. Precisely because the United States is an exceptional nation, its version of liberal democracy may well prove to be the exception, not the rule.¶ In China, Russia, and the sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf, state-led brands of capitalism are holding their own -- and may well do so for the foreseeable future. The Arab Spring could finally bring democratic rule to at least some countries in the Middle East, but it is also breeding political Islam; democratization should not be mistaken for Westernization. Even emerging powers that are already democracies, such as India, Brazil, and Turkey, are charting their own paths. They regularly break with the United States and Europe on trade, Middle East diplomacy, military intervention, the environment, and other issues, preferring to side with other ascending states, whether democratic or not. Romney's paeans to American power are no excuse for his silence on how he plans to manage these complexities.¶ Promoting international stability will grow more demanding as rising powers bring to the table their differing conceptions of order and governance. The United States has a key role to play in managing such diversity and channeling it toward cooperative ends. Overheated proclamations of American preeminence, however, will do more harm than good. If a new, consensual international order is to emerge, rising powers must be treated as stakeholders in that order, not merely as objects of American power.¶ Shepherding the transition to this more pluralistic world is arguably the defining challenge facing U.S. statecraft in the years ahead. Romney appears ready to pave over this challenge by denying that such change is afoot and attempting to portray Obama's policies as "an eloquently justified surrender of world leadership."¶ Obama should welcome this debate and refuse to let his opponents hide behind the veil of American exceptionalism. Democrats no longer need to feel vulnerable on national security; Obama has demonstrated smarts and strength on many issues, including the degradation of al Qaeda, the pivot to Asia, and the isolation of Iran. He understands that agile, firm diplomacy backed by American power will do much more for the United States than congratulatory talk of American primacy.¶ A smarter, more selective, and less costly U.S. role in the world would not only help the United States get its own house in order, but also give rising powers the wider berth they seek. And good policy would also be good politics; Americans are keen to share with others the burdens and responsibilities of international engagement. The world desperately needs a brand of U.S. leadership that focuses not on ruling the roost, but on guiding a more diverse and unwieldy globe to consensus and cooperation.

**Three internal links–**

**First, repeal of the embargo would represent a commitment to multilateralism for the international community**

**Burgsdorff, 9 –** Ph.D. in Political Science from Freiburg University, EU Fellow at the University of Miami (Sven Kühn von, “Problems and Opportunities for the Incoming Obama Administration”, http://aei.pitt.edu.proxy.lib.umich.edu/11047/1/vonBurgsdorfUSvsCubalong09edi.pdf) NG

\*Low U.S. perception – Iraq and Gitmo damages U.S. human rights rep AND no respect for international law makes UN useless

In addition, the US needs to improve its international human rights reputation which was severely damaged by US engagements in Iraq and the treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo. The perception that the US does not do its utmost to fully respect international law is an issue that renders difficult joint efforts to make the UN a meaningful instrument for acting decisively against human rights violations.2 If the US wants to act more effectively in multilateral forums in general on human rights matters, Washington, as a matter of priority, needs to restore US credibility, thus making human rights a more defendable key priority in international relations. Together, the EU and US stand a far better chance of furthering democratic change and sustainable improvement of the living conditions in Cuba. It is also then that other foreign partners, notably from Latin America, could be more easily approached to engage on Cuba along commonly agreed upon agendas. A realistic scenario, however, has to consider that political change in Cuba will probably take longer and most likely be preceded by economic reform measures coming from the regime itself. Foreign actors wishing to assist in this process in a meaningful manner, are well advised to pursue a long term, incentives-based approach to both the Cuban authorities and Cuba’s emerging civil society, including the human rights defenders. Outlook: Will President Obama radically change US policy towards Cuba? An answer to that question requires reviewing three important factors: first, constraints and opportunities in the political environment in the US, i.e. power constellations in the Congress and in Florida; second, interests in Cuba, i.e. Cuba’s elite and the domestic opposition; and third, likely reactions in the international community, i.e. within the Latin American and Caribbean region; in Europe; with respect to Cuba’s allies; and last but not least, at multilateral level. 6.1 What are the key considerations in today’s political environment in the US? During the electoral campaign Obama promised to undo the restrictions on travel and remittances imposed by the first Bush administration. He called the embargo a “complete fiasco” but shied away from suggesting the lifting of the economic sanctions or revoking Helms-Burton, saying that he would maintain the embargo as long as no substantial political reform and release of political prisoners would take place on the island. In essence, Obama’s proposed measures would correspond to a policy similar to the one enacted during the second term of President Clinton. This was during the campaign. Is it reasonable to assume that Obama’s resounding victory nation-wide and in Florida provide a more conducive domestic platform for overhauling for good the failed and discredited embargo policy? Most observers would give a negative answer, at least during President Obama’s first two years in office, and this for the following reasons: First, Cuba and Latin America are not among the top foreign policy concerns at this juncture. Second, while US business is clearly interested in strengthening trade and developing investment ties with Cuba strong pressure, so far, has only come from the agribusiness sector which succeeded in exporting US goods despite the embargo since 2002. Moreover, Cuban demand is still crippled by rather modest purchasing power and the overall business and regulatory environment is certainly not conducive to foreign investment. Third, despite a change in the electoral map overall and a slow generational change within the Cuban-American community, a clear majority of registered Cuban-American voters actually participating in elections leans towards the Republican party and can still be mobilized around the single issue of taking a principled stance against the Castro regime (e.g. all three Republican incumbents in Miami Dade county have re-won their seats; moreover, in 2010 Senator Mel Martinez’ seat comes up for election – if the Democrats were to take his seat they could come close to gaining a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate). Few commentators, on the other hand, think that the new president should and could lift the embargo during his first year in office, arguing that he enjoys at present and for a limited period only, a unique window of opportunity because of the high rate of approval at home and abroad (including in Cuba among the Afro-Cuban community). Lifting the embargo unconditionally would be widely heralded as the dawning of a new era in the Western Hemisphere and beyond, with immediate positive repercussions on bilateral relations with all major Latin American and Caribbean countries. Pressure to lift the embargo, or parts of it, may also come from the powerful US oil lobby if commercially viable finds are discovered in Cuba’s exclusive economic zone, with Cuba actively courting US investments in the remaining off-shore blocks. It would make little sense for the US to prohibit off-shore oil exploration in Florida’s continental shelf when a few miles further down South numerous international companies exploit Cuba’s oil and gas reserves. Moreover, the argument goes, President Obama does not need to ‘pander’ to the conservative Cuban-American vote in South Florida (i.e. those 65% having voted for McCain) because this part of the electorate will remain an anti-Obama constituency no matter what he does. As a matter of fact, the democrats could actually loose Latino votes in Florida in the next elections among the nonCuban Latino community and among those 35% of Cuban-Americans having supported Obama in 2008 (according to exit polls 75% of whom are reported to be against the embargo) if his Cuba policy changes remain largely symbolic, i.e. simply undoing what has been established under President Bush, while maintaining the embargo. As far as the 2010 Florida senate seat is concerned seasoned political analysts recall that, traditionally, any incumbent president’s party tends to loose seats in mid-term elections, thus making the prospect of getting closer to the 60 seat majority a rather difficult task (especially if former governor Jeb Bush were to run for the vacant post). 6.2 How about the political environment in Cuba? Since coming to power in August 2006 Raul Castro has reiterated on several occasions that Cuba is willing to discuss with the US ways and means to improve bilateral relations and bring an end to the policy of confrontation. The only requisite would be to conduct these talks on the basis of equality and without any political pre-conditions. These statements did not contain much of a political risk for Havana since they were unlikely to be heeded by the Bush administration. If, however, the Obama administration were to take them at face value, it is fair to say that Cuba’s government appears to be ill-prepared for commencing meaningful discussions with the US. For the past 50 years the official dogma was based on the premise that US policy is hostile, interventionist and imperialist. A fundamental overhaul of the US approach towards Havana would make it difficult for the Cuban government to continue propagating the David-versus-Goliath myth, considering that the new US president, as an Afro-American, shares with two-thirds of Cubans a similar ethnic background. Obama may indeed be perceived by many in Cuba as the personification of a different, less fearful and certainly better America. In this context it is interesting to note that Armando Hart, former Minister of Culture and one of the chief ideologues of the Communist party, published an article in Granma in October 2008 where he underlined the need for defending the Cuban Revolution against the erosive power of a non-embargo centered, i.e. open door US policy towards Cuba. Havana might, indeed, not be ready yet to engage with Washington under a non-embargo scenario. The present situation, with the embargo being nominally in place (yet discredited internationally and in Cuba, in addition to being undermined in its impact because of direct commercial links with US business and the massive flow of remittances without the ‘danger’ of millions of visiting Americans pouring into the island), seems to be the best of both worlds for Cuba: while Havana can blame US hostility for domestic development problems, which serves the regime well politically both abroad and at home, the embargo does not do any major economic and financial damage that would jeopardize the survival of the regime. Furthermore, Cuba’s illegal political opposition strongly disagrees with the embargo because the continuation of a coercive policy framework is used by the authorities as a pretext to discredit those opposing the regime as ‘puppets’ and ‘counterrevolutionary agents’ at the service of the US. The Cuban opposition would clearly prefer Washington to conduct an open door policy addressing all sectors of the Cuban society, including, of course, concrete measures supporting directly the emerging dissident movement and providing high-profile visibility to human rights defenders. 6.3 How would the international community react? At international level all major actors would clearly welcome an end to the embargo. While the sanctions policy allowed European, Canadian and, more recently, Venezuelan, Chinese, Brazilian and Russian to become more involved with Cuba in the absence of competitors from the US (with the exception of agriculture produce), most of the foreign powers, and in particular the EU and Latin American countries, would clearly support a definite lifting of the coercive measures. Ending the embargo would be perceived as a decision carrying a momentum of powerful symbolism since it would signal a newly found willingness in Washington to reconsider the usefulness of acting unilaterally and outside the international legal framework. As a matter of fact, together with other measures such as closing Guantanamo, signing up to the Kyoto Protocol and putting into practice the succeeding agreement under the Bali conference, and possibly, joining the International Criminal Court as well as ratifying further international human rights treaties such as the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child, it would be interpreted by the international community as steps towards effective multilateralism.

**Second, the plan fosters a credible conflict resolution model – status quo policies risk disengagement**

**Dickerson, 10** – Lieutenant Colonel, US Army, paper submitted in fulfillment of a Master of Strategic Studies Degree at the US Army War College (Sergio M, “UNITED STATES SECURITY STRATEGY TOWARDS CUBA”, 1/14/10, http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a518053.pdf) NG

At the international political level, President Obama sees resuming relations with Cuba as a real step towards multilateralism and leadership. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon made the following statement about then President-elect Barrack Obama’s national election. “He spoke about a “new era of global partnership…I am confident that we can look forward to an era of renewed partnership and a new multilateralism." To highlight this point further, U.N. nations have voted overwhelmingly since 1992 to overturn the Cuban Embargo. In 2007, 184 nations voted against the embargo5 - a **powerful statement about U.S. unilateralism with regards to Cuba**. The argument can also be made that the U.S. has foreign relations with China, Saudi Arabia and other non-democratic governments while applying a different standard towardsCuba. With growing perception that Cuba no longer poses a credible threat to the U.S., it appears that U.S. policy has changed from coercive to punitive following the end of the Cold War. With a renewed focus on multilateralism, President Obama could go a long way to break this image by spreading the seeds of a “new beginning” in U.S.-Cuba relations. ¶ While dismissing Cuba’s immediate security threat to the U.S., we cannot ignore their 90-mile proximity to the U.S. shore. As we struggle to contain the illegal Mexican exodus into the U.S. and all the security concerns it poses, we neglect to see the historical similarities in past encounters with the Cuban government that led to similar incursions. So if we critically reexamine the current U.S. – Cuba embargo, why does the U.S. believe it will only lead to Cuban democratization? What about government collapse? A Cuban government collapse akin to Somalia could create a significant refugee situation not to mention an implied U.S. responsibility to provide humanitarian and even stability operations in Cuba. If catastrophe does occur, a search for causes would certainly lead back to our punitive approaches to U.S. diplomacy towards Cuba. ¶ On the other hand, consider that foreign diplomacy achieves a breakthrough under Raul’s Cuba. It could certainly hedge our influence in Latin America. According to Dr. DeShazo, “close bilateral relationships with Venezuela is a product of Fidel Castro-Hugo Chavez friendship and does not enjoy much popular support in Cuba-nor with Raul.” If true, perhaps having a U.S. - Cuba option can become an alternative to that relationship post Fidel Castro. Loosening or lifting the embargo could also be mutually beneficial. Cuba’s need and America’s surplus capability could be mutually beneficial - and eventually addictive to Cuba. Under these conditions, diplomacy has a better chance to flourish. **If negotiations break down** and a decision to continue the embargo is reached, **international support would be easier to garner**. ¶ Almost 21 years since the wall fell in Berlin, it is time to chip away at the diplomatic wall that still remains between U.S. and Cuba. This paper will further define our interests in Cuba and why President Obama should continue his quest for renewed diplomatic relations with Cuba. It will discuss potential risks associated with retaining the current 50-year diplomatic policy and give some broad suggestions regarding a new U.S. – Cuba foreign policy.¶ Policy and National Interest¶ Present U.S. policy towards Cuba is economic isolation imposed via embargo to coerce Cuba into establishing a representative government. While the basic policy remains unchanged, the same is not true about U.S. interests in Cuba. During the Cold War, stated U.S. interest was to contain Communism, the leading edge of which was Cuba. More than anything the U.S. wanted Castro’s demise but international support hinged on preventing the spread of communism. After 1989, communism was under siege and capitalism was on the rise. U.S. interests now shifted towards peace and regional stability. Of course, removing the Castro regime was still the preferred method, but without Soviet collusion Castro’s Cuba was no longer a credible threat to the U.S. Not surprisingly, international support quickly dwindled leaving the U.S. as the unilateral enforcer. In hindsight many argued it was the right time to loosen the embargo and seek better relations with Cuba. Instead, a renewed passion to topple Castro and establish democracy fractured any hopes to rekindle relations. In retrospect, Kennedy could not have foreseen a 50-year embargo that survives the Soviet Union’s demise but fails to remove Castro. The same cannot be said about the Obama Administration today. This section will analyze U.S. – Cuba policy, past opportunities and ultimate failure over the past 50 years. ¶ From 1959 to1964, beginning with President Eisenhower but shaped primarily by the Kennedy Administration, U.S. policy was to remove Fidel Castro and establish Democracy in Cuba.6 It can be argued that this policy resonates today but during the early period the U.S. actively pursued removal as the decisive action that would lead to Democracy in Cuba. Political and military efforts to remove Castro in 1961 were reinforced by the initial embargo implementation and tightening that was most effective. Between1965 and 1970, U.S. attempts to maintain a multilateral embargo failed and its effectiveness withered as western governments refused to acquiesce to U.S. - led sanctions. By the time the OAS officially lifted the embargo, Cuba had successfully diversified its trade portfolio and by 1974, 45% of Cuba’s exports came from western governments.7¶ The period 1965-1972, although officially endorsing the previous administration’s tough stance, largely ignored its neighbor while it dealt with the more pressing conflict in Viet Nam. Containment and a period of Presidential ambivalence towards Cuba allowed tensions to cool between nations. This coupled with a growing fatigue with the Viet Nam War resulted in a renewed engagement to normalize relations with Cuba. A policy of “rapprochement” or normalization began with the Nixon Administration and received promising traction under the Carter Administration in 1977. The rapprochement period, 1973 – 1980, was President Carter’s attempt to curtail communism in Africa and Latin America. By normalizing relations with Cuba, President Carter could leverage this good will to reverse Cuban presence in Ethiopia, Angola and Zaire. Several overt measures were taken to reduce embargo restrictions and in February, 1977 State Department spokesmen Fred Brown “publically acknowledged and accepted a Cuban proposal to begin bilateral talks on maritime boundaries and fishing rights.”8 In June, U.S. National Security Council decided to end the practice of blacklisting foreign ships that called on Cuban ports. Perhaps the most notable improvement that year was to allow foreign diplomats to occupy each other’s embassies. This allowed direct communication between countries; the previous practice had been to use Swiss and Czech proxies.9 Several incidents including the “Soviet Brigade” and the “Mariel Boatlift” in 1980 intensified this opposition and quickly derailed Carter’s initiatives in Congress.¶ As President Reagan took office in 1980, U.S. – Cuba relations had already soured. The Reagan Administration would reinforce the weakened embargo and a return to a containment strategy under the auspices that Cuba was “promoting terrorism and subversion in virtually every Latin American country”. But strong Congressional opposition against normalizing relations took center stage during the 1980 presidential elections. Several incidents including the “Soviet Brigade” and the “Mariel Boatlift” in 1980 intensified this opposition and quickly derailed Carter’s initiatives in Congress. 10 The White House policy was to “disrupt and destabilize the island’s economy, terminate the Cuban-Soviet alliance, end Cuba’s internationalism, and finally reinsert Cuba within the capitalist politicaleconomic orbit.”11 President Reagan made every attempt to return to an “airtight” embargo but Cuba’s persistent trade with the west subverted the effort. In fact, British and Canadian companies could conduct trade in “America’s back garden without having to compete with U.S. companies.”12 Reagan did however, exact a toll on Cuba’s economy by preventing other nations from allowing Cuba to reschedule its debt: “a process of negotiating new loans to replace existing obligations, either by lengthening maturities, deferring of loan principal payment.”13 This action compelled Cuba to make its most overt concessions towards normalizing U.S. - Cuban relations. Castro removed troops from Africa and reclaimed 2,700 Cuban refugees that had departed to America during the 1980 Mariel Boatlift. Castro even allowed a U.S. Human Rights delegation to visit prisoners in Cuba. In return, the Reagan and Bush Administrations made no significant concessions to Cuba and status quo between countries remained. ¶ The last meaningful opportunity for change occurred after the fall of the Berlin Wall and particularly the window it presented the U.S. following the collapse in Soviet – Cuba relations. During the period 1990 – 1993, internal and economic turmoil following the Soviet Union’s break-up led to a drastic cut in Soviet subsidies and trade relations with Cuba. This action compelled Cuba to make its most overt concessions towards normalizing U.S. - Cuban relations. Castro removed troops from Africa and reclaimed 2,700 Cuban refugees that had departed to America during the 1980 Mariel Boatlift. Castro even allowed a U.S. Human Rights delegation to visit prisoners in Cuba. In return, the Reagan and Bush Administrations made no significant concessions to Cuba and status quo between countries remained. 14 This led to a 34% drop in Cuban economy forcing Castro to renew western trade options and relook his own draconian business and commercial practices. The first Bush Administration passed on this precious opportunity, ignoring Cuba’s overt concessions late in the previous administration and choosing instead to enact the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act reversing Carter’s amendment to allow third country U.S. companies from trading with Cuba.15¶ By the time President Clinton came to office, momentum had already shifted in Cuba’s favor. Cuba’s economy began to rise in 1994 reaching its apex in 1996 with a 41% increase thanks to foreign investments in tourism. The introduction of the HelmsBurton legislation in 1996 gained Congressional traction after the Cuban Air force shot down two, anti-Castro “Brothers in Rescue,” planes over Cuba. The Helms-Burton Act created unrealistic expectations for the Cuban government before U.S. would loosen restrictions with Cuba. A total of eight requirements had to be met and the most controversial of these included; a transitional government in place unlike the Castro regime; the dissolution of the Department of State; Cuba must hold free and fair elections and a controversial property law that allowed property owners that left Cuba as early as 1959, to make claims in U.S. Courts on that property. With Cuba’s economy on the rise, this new measure to tighten the noose failed terribly and only succeeded in further alienating both governments.¶ The second Bush Administration did little to engage Cuba and after September 11, 2001, was completely engrossed in the War on Terror. U.S. policy towards Cuba has changed little in 50 years. Although the embargo continues to fail despite our best efforts to tighten it, our policy has remained steadfast and the U.S. is no closer to normalizing relations with Cuba.¶ A History of Anger and Distrust¶ After 50 years, deep-seated distrust and anger exists between the U.S. and Cuba. Perhaps an obvious assessment, but one that if ignored could undermine attempts to repair diplomatic relations between countries. Several diplomatic pitfalls developed over the years could hinder any attempt to reestablish relations. They could spell disaster and set an already tenuous relationship back decades. These triggers are subtle but recognizable over a long and tumultuous period in U.S. – Cuba relations. A historical account will help identify these political impasses and create favorable conditions for diplomatic success in future U.S. – Cuba relations. ¶ Experts argue over who’s started the dispute between nations: was it the Cuban Agrarian Reform Act in 1959 that nationalized agrarian land in Cuba to include U.S. owned lands? Could it have been Cuba’s decision to resume trade with the Soviet 9Union that led to a U.S. imposed embargo on Cuba in 1960? Perhaps the bigger issue was how diplomatic, economic and military efforts by both countries continued to aggravate already strained relations.16 In 1961, Cuban exiles supported by the Central Intelligence Agency failed to topple the Castro government. The Bay of Pigs fiasco sent Cuba a clear signal that the U.S. was not interested in negotiation. Castro answered immediately by allowing Soviets to position nuclear missiles in Cuba, threatening U.S. vital security and leading to the Cuban Missile Crises. These intentions have survived to the present undermining any attempt to pursue common interest and reduce tensions. The underlying fear that U.S. remains committed to toppling the Cuban government constitutes the first diplomatic pitfall in U.S. – Cuban relations. For this very reason, democratic reform will not succeed as a diplomatic bargaining tool with Cuba. Suspicions run deep among Cuban leaders and any inferences to government reform, albeit noble, will impede meaningful relations. Human rights advocacy, free trade and limited business opportunities in Cuba may be more plausible and could eventually encourage the long-term changes U.S. wants in Cuba. ¶ The embargo itself remains a **perpetual albatross** that continues to undermine any real diplomatic progress between nations. A series of coercive measures designed to topple the Castro regime began with U.S. – led efforts to expel Cuba from the Organization of American States (OAS) in January 1962 followed by trade prohibitions on imports and exports to Cuba by the U.S. Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). 17 This was achieved by leveraging an existing 1954 OAS Caracas Resolution designed to prevent trade with communist countries called Trading with the Enemy.18 After bilateral sanctions are established, U.S. pursued broader international support by 10enacting the October 1962 Battle Act prohibiting U.S. assistance to any country that traded with Cuba. An early attempt to persuade the North American Treaty Organization (NATO) nations to comply with the embargo yielded limited success.19 However, a new perceived security threat brought on by the Cuban Missile Crises in late 1962 gave U.S. the leverage it needed in February 1964 to convince NATO nations to effectively cease trade with Cuba. In July 1964, OAS followed NATO’s lead; U.S. had succeeded in isolating Cuba from its western traders.20¶ Tightening the noose placed extraordinary economic pressure on Cuba considering U.S. multilateral efforts reduced western trade by 73% in 1964. Cuba was obliged to subsidize this deficit with the Soviet Union and China between1961 – 1973. This trend continued by enticing Latin American and other western countries like Canada and England in the 1980s and following the Soviet fall in the 1990s.21Commensurately, Presidential administrations have loosened and tightened the embargo repeatedly as the climate between nations improved or deteriorated. The Cuban Defense Act in 1992 and the Helms Burton Act in 1996 tightened embargo restrictions signaling continued U.S. intentions to remove the Castro regime. But the U.S. - led embargo played right into Castro’s hand. Castro accused the U.S. calling it “another economic aggression” and stating that Cubans would have to undergo “long years of sacrifice.”22 By demonizing U.S. policy, he was able to galvanize Cuban support during the toughest times. The embargo helped create the American enemy, removing any popular support for rebellion and elevating Castro’s struggle to a legitimate Cuban struggle.11Castro was also complicit in the failure to mend U.S. – Cuba relations. Hiscontinued attempts to export communism began in Africa with a total 55,000 troops in Angola and Ethiopia by 1978. He focused efforts closer to Latin America by supporting Puerto Rican independence movement in 1975, the Sandinistas overthrow in Nicaragua in 1979 and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation (FMLN) in El Salvador. Cuba’s support to Columbia’s M19 (Columbian Election Day April 19, 1970) guerilla movement labeled Cuba a “state sponsor of terrorism” in 1982.23 Castro’s expansion efforts fueled U.S. security paranoia and prevented several overt efforts by the Carter Administration to improve relations with Cuba. In April 1980, an incident at the U.S. Mission in Havana led 120,000 Cubans to depart Mariel Port by boat to the U.S.24 The incident better known as the “Mariel Boatlift” became the tipping point that inhibited further relations with Cuba. Despite the growing tensions between the U.S. and Cuba, trade between the west and Cuba increased. NATO compliance with U.S. - brokered trade restrictions broke down after 1966 in particular due to British and Canadian opposition. U.S. efforts to use the OAS embargo to influence the United Nations also failed. In 1974, Latin American leaders pushed to end the OAS embargo. In 1975 the OAS lifted the embargo with Cuba and the embargo returned to a bilateral embargo now condemnedby most western countries.25 In 1982, Cuba’s failing economy led Castro to pursue western trade with a renewed vigor. By “1987, more than 370 firms from twenty-three European, Latin American, and Asian countries participated in Cuba’s largest ever annual trade fair.”26¶ Castro’s interest in improving U.S. - Cuba relations was perhaps the greatest from 1982-1988. Castro made statements in 1982 to resume talks with the U.S.; he took back more than 1000 Mariel Boatlift criminals that came to the U.S. in 1987 and pulled troops out of Angola in 1988 to mention a few. These rare moments and apparent seams in Castro’s armor were left unanswered by the Reagan and Bush Administrations. Instead renewed efforts to continue ratcheting a now largely ineffective bilateral embargo served only to increase animosity between both countries.¶ It is difficult to quantify, but essential to note, that U.S. action over the years seems to support a hatred for Fidel Castro that interferes with any attempt to established diplomatic relations with Cuba. If true, to neglect this assumption could undermine any efforts to reverse our seemingly punitive approach. Perhaps it can be traced to his support for a Soviet-style communism. After all, few things in 1960 America were feared and despised more than communism. Any country affiliated with the communist movement became an affront to the American way of life. Furthermore, Americans shed blood in Cuba during the 1898 Spanish American War leading to Cuban Independence in 1902.27 Fidel Castro became evil’s face in Cuba and any attempt to partner with Castro seemed equally tainted. Fast forwarding to the present, with communism no longer a threat, perhaps it’s time to let the anger fade and deal with Cuba for its’ diplomatic merit not past indiscretions. The question remains whether clear objectiveness leads U.S. diplomatic efforts with Cuba? It is important to note that what’s at stake here is U.S. national interests and not the legacy of Fidel Castro.¶ Another important pitfall is to exploit democracy as a precondition for diplomacy and **economic engagement** in Cuba. If democracy is virtuous, then why must we exploit it? It casts a negative shadow on a positive change in government. There is a common perception that U.S. policy with regards to security and stability can only exist under the precondition of a “Democratic Cuba”. It has prevented any real progress in U.S. – Cuba relations because of well placed fears that we mean to subvert the Cuban government. A popular Cuban American lobby group, The Cuban American National Foundation summarizes traditional U.S. beliefs towards Cuba. They suggest, “U.S. – Cuba policy should focus on (1) advancing U.S. interests and security in the region and (2) empowering Cuban people in their quest for democracy and prosperity…that these are “intertwined and one cannot be individually accomplished without the other.”28 The recommendation then focuses largely on steps to pursue a democratic Cuba. ¶ To separate security and stability from democratic pursuits in Cuba could benefit both causes. Focusing on better diplomatic relations could further democracy as a byproduct of increased exposure to open markets, businesses and globalization. China is a good example. The U.S. has diffused tensions with China by exposing them to open markets. Although they continue to embrace communism, their version of communism has been somewhat diluted as they modified their business practices, trade and other aspects to compete in the global marketplace. If you take into account that Cuba’s Growth National Product (GDP) decreased by 4% since 2006 while their debt grew by 16% to almost $20B in 2008, Cuba certainly has incentive to do the same.29 By imposing democracy we jeopardize diplomatic avenues to our principal security and stability pursuits. To assuage the Cuban America position on this issue may be simpler today than 10 years ago. Today’s younger Cuban-American generation is more amenable to closer relations with Cuba. The anger carried by their immigrant forefathers14after 50 years may be passing and perhaps the time is right to leverage this new Cuban American generation to open dialogue with Cuba without the democratic preconditions tied to negotiations. ¶ As we pursue diplomatic relations with Cuba we should not expect full disclosure, immediate results and a Cuban government anxious to please the U.S. We should expect a cautious and limited first engagement that appears noticeably weighted in U.S. effort. Let us assume the U.S. makes significant diplomatic and economic concessions but Cuba is less willing to provide some reciprocal offering. U.S. policy could conclude that Cuba has no genuine desire to consummate new diplomatic relations and diplomacy could fail. It is imperative to understand that the U.S. has done most of the “taking” and hence will, at least for the near future, do most of the “giving”. A steady, patient and continued engagement is needed until Cuba has the confidence to commit to further diplomatic relations. ¶ Current U.S.-Cuba Policy Analysis¶ Understanding the deep-seated animosity and distrust that continues to fuel U.S. - Cuba tensions will aid us in properly analyzing the feasibility, acceptability and suitability (FAS) of current and future U.S. policy with Cuba. Identifying FAS applications to diplomacy, information, military, economic, finance, intelligence and law enforcement (DIME-FIL) will highlight weaknesses in current U.S. – Cuba relations that can be modified for future improvement. ¶ The logical question with regards to current U.S. – Cuba policy is whether it’s feasible to continue the current policy. At least for the foreseeable future, the answer is yes. It equates to doing nothing diplomatically, militarily and economically. Perhaps this 15option is appealing given a robust domestic agenda and U.S. involvement in two wars. According to Professor Schwab and other experts however, the U.S. has lost the information campaign targeted at the Cuban people. It has only, “buttressed Fidel’s popularity in Cuba and elsewhere, which eviscerates the very purposes the embargo was set up for.”30 It’s like the classic biblical story of David triumphing over Goliath – the bigger the oppressor the greater the victory. True or not, Fidel has made the case successfully to the Cuban people. While it’s feasible for the U.S. to pursue the current course there is no evidence it will succeed.¶ How acceptable is it to U.S. foreign policy? There are three elements of national power that highlight our current policy: diplomacy, economy and law enforcement. It is subjective to evaluate acceptability strictly in terms of current national power invested and subsequent pay offs in foreign policy. U.S. needs international cooperation to achieve the coercive effects that only complete economic strangulation can accomplish. This is tough to do and North Korea and Iran bear this true. If we look at it from a broader international and economic perspective we can begin to see why it’s not acceptable. Take a UN General Assembly vote renouncing the U.S.-led embargo on Cuba for instance; since1992 there has been overwhelming vote to end the embargo.31 In essence, it has garnered sympathy for Castro and encouraged western nations like Canada and Spain to continue open relations with Cuba. Even if the embargo could work, U.S. diplomacy has failed to yield the international tourniquet needed to bring change in Cuba. Applying economic force without first garnering the necessary diplomatic support failed to achieve intended changes succeeding instead in hurting the Cuban people it hoped to protect. Whether or not an embargo can work in Cuba is suspect but succeeding without international support is impossible. Since the embargo hinges on a larger multinational participation, international and not just U.S. acceptability is necessary to achieve U.S. ends in Cuba.¶ Several embargo refinements over the years like the Libertad Act have further tightened restrictions on Cuba. These restrictions have placed a heavy burden on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) particularly in Miami. A 2007 GAO report highlights these burdens and how they impede other more important Law Enforcement activities in defense of the homeland.32 GAO findings suggest there’s a real need to balance U.S. paranoia for “everything Cuba.” This rebalancing purports an unacceptable cost-benefit to the current law enforcement aspect of the embargo. It diminishes our greater need to defend against terrorist, criminals and other real threats to our national security. In essence, our efforts to impose embargo restrictions are unacceptable tradeoffs for homeland security.¶ In the final analysis, U.S. – Cuba policy is not sustainable because it has failed to meet desired national ends: Cuban democracy and human rights. Prior to 1989, the U.S. could make the argument that the embargo contained communism and generally marginalized the Castro government. It failed however, to depose Fidel Castro and democratize the Cuban government. A post Cold War Cuba no longer poses a threat to the U.S. - communism is contained and Cuba is still under embargo. Despite a 50-year failure to affect change in Castro’s government, our policy with regards to Cuba remains unchanged. We have foregone diplomatic engagement and chosen coercive economic power as our only political tool.¶ Does Cuba Pose A Security Threat to the U.S.?¶ Let’s begin by asking this question: can we afford to escort commerce through Caribbean waters from Cuban pirates? This sounds as farfetched as an attack from an Afghan-based Al-Qaida using commercial airliners to destroy the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. This scenario while unexpected is completely contrary to our policy objectives in Cuba. The greater possibility that “something” unfavorable happens in Cuba that threatens U.S. national interests is certainly more relevant. Although Cuba poses no traditional threats to the U.S., geographically, their 90-mile proximity should concern us. Our proximity to Cuba assures U.S. involvement, be it voluntary or involuntary, in a major crisis. Consider a disease outbreak that begins in Cuba over a break down in hygiene, government pollution or other misfortune attributable to economic strife. The disease has no boundaries and quickly reaches the Florida shores via travelling Cuban American citizens. This scenario could be mitigated or even preventable under the auspices of better relations. Aside from the obvious medical benefits a partnership provides, established communications with Cuba would likely prevent an uncontrolled spread in the U.S. There are definite advantages to having healthy regional partnerships to deal with regional problems. ¶ While economic pressure has failed to bring about government change, it could trigger a government collapse. If Cuba becomes a “failing” or “failed state” we could see a huge refugee flood into the U.S., increased crime and drug trafficking across U.S. borders, and renewed security and stability issue in the region. In 1980, 120,000 Cuban refugees fled Mariel and 20,000 more in 1994 after Cuba declared an open immigration policy.33 From 2004 – 2007, 131,000 Cubans have made residence in the U.S. Almost 38,000 settled in Florida alone in 2006. Although it’s mere speculation to presume Cuba will fail, if it did, there is no question where Cubans would seek refuge. A failed state could eventually draw U.S. involvement into nation building in Cuba taking a greater toll on our national resources. This scenario, while unexpected, is completely contrary to our policy objectives in Cuba. Current U.S. policy is no longer a sustainable option to achieving our national interests in Cuba. Until realignment can bring national policy back in line with national interests, conditions will not exist for real change in U.S. – Cuba relations.¶ Proposed U.S.-Cuba Policy Analysis¶ If today marks President Obama’s “new strategy” towards Cuba we must begin with U.S. National interests in the broader Latin American context. Over the past 50 years our approach has been germane to Cuba and not the larger Latin American construct. In so doing we have isolated Cuba from Latin America for coercive reasons yes, but also for the very democratic principles we hoped Cuba would follow. ¶ The State Department’s Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (covers Canada and Cuba) has set the following goals for the region: “Economic partners that are democratic, stable, and prosperous; Friendly neighbors that help secure our region against terrorism and illegal drugs; Nations that work together in the world to advance shared political and economic values.”34 To simplify these goals, let us just say stability, economic prosperity and democracy. Using these as a benchmark, I propose our new diplomatic strategy towards Cuba must be similar - achieve economic stability, security and a representative government as the “end state” goal and not the prerequisite for engagement. President Obama can implement this policy by first building American and Congressional support for engagement. He should establish a formal infrastructure that communicates to Cuba and the International Community at large that we’re serious about diplomatic engagement with Cuba. Finally, we must loosen embargo restrictions and expose Cubans to U.S. open markets, business opportunities and 21st Century living. This combination will improve relations with Cuba by regaining their trust, improving their living conditions and exposing them to the democratic enticements we hope they will emulate.¶ Achieving Congressional approval will be difficult although not impossible in the present economic recession. The economic benefits associated with new business opportunities in Cuba can encourage skeptics in Congress to mobilize. As a counterargument to a continued embargo, the President can point to the dangers associated with failed states like Somalia inadvertently caused by the very environment sanctions create. A strong communication strategy to gain American support coupled with a softening Cuban American stance, shrouded in economic opportunity, could encourage Congressional dialogue and resolution. President Obama can succeed if he sets realistic goals and expresses these to the American public before the media or his opposition defines these.¶ We’ve established that coercive means have failed to achieve democracy and economic stability in Cuba. I’m suggesting there is another mutually beneficial alternative. Using China as an example, their exposure and need to compete in free global markets broadened their horizons and shifted their hard line communist approach to international diplomacy. This was a feat that coercive diplomacy has not accomplished in Cuba. Yet we still have civil disagreements with China on human rights issues, Taiwan’s right to independence and other contentious issues without resorting to coercive measures. Why should Cuba receive different treatment? The confusion lies with our tendency to impose democracy as a precondition for diplomatic relations. How can Cuba subscribe to small business practices, a free economy building block, if business opportunities are not available? Diplomatic engagement and economic encouragement has a better chance. Cuba’s economic condition incentivizes their willingness to begin diplomatic negotiations. The U.S. should begin by focusing efforts to establish diplomatic relations through incentives rather than coercion. We must also set the democratic precondition aside to pursue when the relationship matures and trust is reestablished. Exposing them to new opportunities will eventually, through their own discovery and U.S. shepherding, lead them to a more representative government. ¶ If we accept that reestablishing relations with Cuba is the first real step to a democratic end-state then the first action must be to appoint an Ambassador to Cuba. This diplomatic gesture signals that U.S. is serious about foreign relations. The Ambassador’s first actions must include setting the conditions with Cuba to allow a loosening of embargo restrictions. President Obama, in the spirit of multilateralism, should pursue international solidarity since some countries enjoying exclusive trade with Cuba would certainly protest the immediate competition. Choosing a time-phased removal would protect U.S. assets and interests in the remote possibility that Cuba fails to comply with the agreed bi-national or international terms. It might also sooth domestic and partisan anxiety regarding open trade with Cuba. President Obama must accomplish this early in his first term to allow time to reap success or mitigate failure before the next elections.¶ The U.S. cannot afford to miss another opportunity to normalize relations with Cuba. A Cuba without Fidel is an opportunity – whether it is Raul or his replacement in 2013. The U.S. must lay the foundation today for renewed U.S. Cuba relations. Delaying could also signal the contrary to Raul Castro suspiciously awaiting the true purpose of recent U.S. concessions.¶ While a long term goal may be to influence change in government, it cannot be the basis for initial success and continued diplomacy. With diplomatic patience and a prosperous Cuba, we have reason to believe, like China and Russia that capitalism will prevail over communism. But new politicians and a younger generation of Americans who measure success between terms and administrations will not understand if results aren’t immediate or commensurate to U.S. efforts. Instead, the strategy pursued must occur with a measured diplomatic optimism that insures immediate setbacks don’t derail the restoration of trust that must occur before complete reciprocation can be expected.¶ Conclusion¶ Today, 20 years have passed since the fall of the Berlin Wall – it’s time to chip away at the diplomatic wall that still remains between U.S. and Cuba. As we seek a new foreign policy with Cuba it is imperative that we take into consideration that distrust will characterize negotiations with the Cuban government. On the other hand, consider that loosening or lifting the embargo could also be mutually beneficial. Cuba’s need and America’s surplus capability to provide goods and services could be profitable and eventually addictive to Cuba. Under these conditions, diplomacy has a better chance to flourish. ¶ If the Cuban model succeeds President Obama will be seen as a true leader for multilateralism. Success in Cuba could **afford the international momentum and credibility to solve other seemingly “wicked problems” like the Middle East and Kashmir**. President Obama could leverage this international reputation with other rogue nations like Iran and North Korea who might associate their plight with Cuba.35 The U.S. could begin to lead again and reverse its perceived decline in the greater global order bringing true peace for years to come.

**Third, the plan sends a clear signal of Latin American cooperation to reinvigorate the OAS**

**White, 13** – senior fellow at the Center for International Policy and former U.S. ambassador to Paraguay and El Salvador (Robert, “After Chávez, a Chance to Rethink Relations With Cuba”, New York Times, 3/7/13, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/08/opinion/after-chavez-hope-for-good-neighbors-in-latin-america.html?pagewanted=all) TL

FOR most of our history, the United States assumed that its security was inextricably linked to a partnership with Latin America. This legacy dates from the Monroe Doctrine, articulated in 1823, through the Rio pact, the postwar treaty that pledged the United States to come to the defense of its allies in Central and South America.¶ Yet for a half-century, our policies toward our southern neighbors have alternated between intervention and neglect, inappropriate meddling and missed opportunities. The death this week of President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela — who along with Fidel Castro of Cuba was perhaps the most vociferous critic of the United States among the political leaders of the Western Hemisphere in recent decades — offers an opportunity to restore bonds with potential allies who share the American goal of prosperity.¶ Throughout his career, the autocratic Mr. Chávez used our embargo as a wedge with which to antagonize the United States and alienate its supporters. His fuel helped prop up the rule of Mr. Castro and his brother Raúl, Cuba’s current president. The embargo no longer serves any useful purpose (if it ever did at all); President Obama should end it, though it would mean overcoming powerful opposition from Cuban-American lawmakers in Congress.¶ An **end to the Cuba embargo would send a powerful signal to all of Latin America** that the United States wants a new, warmer relationship with democratic forces seeking social change throughout the Americas.¶ I joined the State Department as a Foreign Service officer in the 1950s and chose to serve in Latin America in the 1960s. I was inspired by President John F. Kennedy’s creative response to the revolutionary fervor then sweeping Latin America. The 1959 Cuban revolution, led by the charismatic Fidel Castro, had inspired revolts against the cruel dictatorships and corrupt pseudodemocracies that had dominated the region since the end of Spanish and Portuguese rule in the 19th century.¶ Kennedy had a charisma of his own, and it captured the imaginations of leaders who wanted democratic change, not violent revolution. Kennedy reacted to the threat of continental insurrection by creating the Alliance for Progress, a kind of Marshall Plan for the hemisphere that was calculated to achieve the same kind of results that saved Western Europe from Communism. He pledged billions of dollars to this effort. In hindsight, it may have been overly ambitious, even naïve, but Kennedy’s focus on Latin America rekindled the promise of the Good Neighbor Policy of Franklin D. Roosevelt and transformed the whole concept of inter-American relations.¶ Tragically, after Kennedy’s assassination in 1963, the ideal of the Alliance for Progress crumbled and “la noche mas larga” — “the longest night” — began for the proponents of Latin American democracy. Military regimes flourished, democratic governments withered, moderate political and civil leaders were labeled Communists, rights of free speech and assembly were curtailed and human dignity crushed, largely because the United States abandoned all standards save that of anti-Communism.¶ During my Foreign Service career, I did what I could to oppose policies that supported dictators and closed off democratic alternatives. In 1981, as the ambassador to El Salvador, I refused a demand by the secretary of state, Alexander M. Haig Jr., that I use official channels to cover up the Salvadoran military’s responsibility for the murders of four American churchwomen. I was fired and forced out of the Foreign Service.¶ The Reagan administration, under the illusion that Cuba was the power driving the Salvadoran revolution, turned its policy over to the Pentagon and C.I.A., with predictable results. During the 1980s the United States helped expand the Salvadoran military, which was dominated by uniformed assassins. We armed them, trained them and covered up their crimes.¶ After our counterrevolutionary efforts failed to end the Salvadoran conflict, the Defense Department asked its research institute, the RAND Corporation, what had gone wrong. RAND analysts found that United States policy makers had refused to accept the obvious truth that the insurgents were rebelling against social injustice and state terror. As a result, “we pursued a policy unsettling to ourselves, for ends humiliating to the Salvadorans and at a cost disproportionate to any conventional conception of the national interest.”¶ Over the subsequent quarter-century, a series of profound political, social and economic changes have undermined the traditional power bases in Latin America and, with them, longstanding regional institutions like the Organization of American States. The organization, which is headquartered in Washington and which excluded Cuba in 1962, was seen as irrelevant by Mr. Chávez. He promoted the creation of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States — which excludes the United States and Canada — as an alternative.¶ At a regional meeting that included Cuba and excluded the United States, Mr. Chávez said that “the most positive thing for the independence of our continent is that we meet alone without the hegemony of empire.”¶ Mr. Chávez was masterful at manipulating America’s antagonism toward Fidel Castro as a rhetorical stick with which to attack the United States as an imperialist aggressor, an enemy of progressive change, interested mainly in treating Latin America as a vassal continent, a source of cheap commodities and labor.¶ Like its predecessors, the Obama administration has given few signs that it has grasped the magnitude of these changes or cares about their consequences. After President Obama took office in 2009, Latin America’s leading statesman at the time, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, then the president of Brazil, urged Mr. Obama to normalize relations with Cuba.¶ Lula, as he is universally known, correctly identified our Cuba policy as the chief stumbling block to renewed ties with Latin America, as it had been since the very early years of the Castro regime.¶ After the failure of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, Washington set out to accomplish by stealth and economic strangulation what it had failed to do by frontal attack. But the clumsy mix of covert action and porous boycott succeeded primarily in bringing shame on the United States and turning Mr. Castro into a folk hero.¶ And even now, despite the relaxing of travel restrictions and Raúl Castro’s announcement that he will retire in 2018, the implacable hatred of many within the Cuban exile community continues. The fact that two of the three Cuban-American members of the Senate — Marco Rubio of Florida and Ted Cruz of Texas — are rising stars in the Republican Party complicates further the potential for a recalibration of Cuban-American relations. (The third member, Senator Robert Menendez, Democrat of New Jersey, is the new chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, but his power has been weakened by a continuing ethics controversy.)¶ Are there any other examples in the history of diplomacy where the leaders of a small, weak nation can prevent a great power from acting in its own best interest merely by staying alive?¶ The re-election of President Obama, and the death of Mr. Chávez, give America a chance to reassess the irrational hold on our imaginations that Fidel Castro has exerted for five decades. The president and his new secretary of state, John Kerry, should quietly reach out to Latin American leaders like President Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia and José Miguel Insulza, secretary general of the Organization of American States. The message should be simple: The president is prepared to show some flexibility on Cuba and asks your help.¶ Such a simple request could transform the Cuban issue from a bilateral problem into a multilateral challenge. It would then be up to Latin Americans to devise a policy that would help Cuba achieve a sufficient measure of democratic change to justify its reintegration into a hemisphere composed entirely of elected governments.¶ If, however, our present policy paralysis continues, we will soon see the emergence of two rival camps, the United States versus Latin America. While Washington would continue to enjoy friendly relations with individual countries like Brazil, Mexico and Colombia, the vision of Roosevelt and Kennedy of a hemisphere of partners cooperating in matters of common concern would be reduced to a historical footnote.

**That bolsters influence in international institutions, allowing the US to lead multilateral forums**

**Sabatini and Berger, 12 –** Christopher Sabatini is editor-in-chief of Americas Quarterly and senior director of policy at Americas Society/Council of the Americas. Ryan Berger is a policy associate at the Americas Society/Council of the Americas (Christopher/Ryan, "Why the U.S. can't afford to ignore Latin America", 6/13/12, CNN/Global Public Square, http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2012/06/13/why-the-u-s-cant-afford-to-ignore-latin-america/) AD

Speaking in Santiago, Chile, in March of last year, President Obama called Latin America “a region on the move,” one that is “more important to the prosperity and security of the United States than ever before.” Somebody forgot to tell the Washington brain trust. The Center for a New American Security, a respected national security think tank a half-mile from the White House, recently released a new series of policy recommendations for the next presidential administration. The 70-page “grand strategy” report only contained a short paragraph on Brazil and made only one passing reference to Latin America. Yes, we get it. The relative calm south of the United States seems to pale in comparison to other developments in the world: China on a seemingly inevitable path to becoming a global economic powerhouse, the potential of political change in the Middle East, the feared dismemberment of the eurozone, and rogue states like Iran and North Korea flaunting international norms and regional stability. But the need to shore up our allies and recognize legitimate threats south of the Rio Grande goes to the heart of the U.S.’ changing role in the world and its strategic interests within it. Here are three reasons why the U.S. must include Latin America in its strategic calculations: 1. Today, pursuing a global foreign policy requires regional allies. Recently, countries with emerging economies have appeared to be taking positions diametrically opposed to the U.S. when it comes to matters of global governance and human rights. Take, for example, Russia and China’s stance on Syria, rejecting calls for intervention. Another one of the BRICS, Brazil, tried to stave off the tightening of U.N. sanctions on Iran two years ago. And last year, Brazil also voiced its official opposition to intervention in Libya, leading political scientist Randall Schweller to refer to Brazil as “a rising spoiler.” At a time of (**perceived**) declining U.S. influence, it’s important that America deepens its ties with **regional allies** that might have been once taken for granted. As emerging nations such as Brazil clamor for permanent seats on the U.N. Security Council and more representatives in the higher reaches of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the U.S. will need to integrate them into global decision-making rather than isolate them. If not, they could be a thorn in the side of the U.S. as it tries to implement its foreign policy agenda. Worse, they could threaten to undermine efforts to defend international norms and human rights. 2. Latin America is becoming more international. It’s time to understand that the U.S. isn’t the only country that has clout in Latin America. For far too long, U.S. officials and Latin America experts have tended to treat the region as separate, politically and strategically, from the rest of the world. But as they’ve fought battles over small countries such as Cuba and Honduras and narrow bore issues such as the U.S.-Colombia free-trade agreement, other countries like China and India have increased their economic presence and political influence in the region. It’s also clear that countries such as Brazil and Venezuela present their own challenges to U.S. influence in the region and even on the world forum. The U.S. must embed its Latin America relations in the conceptual framework and strategy that it has for the rest of the world, rather than just focus on human rights and development as it often does toward southern neighbors such as Cuba. 3. There are security and strategic risks in the region. Hugo Chavez’s systematic deconstruction of the Venezuelan state and alleged ties between FARC rebels and some of Chavez’s senior officials have created a volatile cocktail that could explode south of the U.S. border. FARC, a left-wing guerrilla group based in Colombia, has been designated as a “significant foreign narcotics trafficker” by the U.S. government. At the same time, gangs, narcotics traffickers and transnational criminal syndicates are overrunning Central America. In 2006, Mexican President Felipe Calderón launched a controversial “war on drugs” that has since resulted in the loss of over 50,000 lives and increased the levels of violence and corruption south of the Mexican border in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and even once-peaceful Costa Rica. Increasingly, these already-weak states are finding themselves overwhelmed by the corruption and violence that has come with the use of their territory as a transit point for drugs heading north. Given their proximity and close historical and political connections with Washington, the U.S. will find it increasingly difficult not to be drawn in. Only this case, it won’t be with or against governments — as it was in the 1980s — but in the far more complex, sticky situation of failed states. There are many other reasons why Latin America is important to U.S. interests. It is a market for more than 20% of U.S. exports. With the notable exception of Cuba, it is nearly entirely governed by democratically elected governments — a point that gets repeated ad nauseum at every possible regional meeting. The Western Hemisphere is a major source of energy that has the highest potential to seriously reduce dependence on Middle East supply. And through immigration, Latin America has close personal and cultural ties to the United States. These have been boilerplate talking points since the early 1990s. But the demands of the globe today are different, and they warrant a renewed engagement with Latin America — a strategic pivot point for initiatives the U.S. wants to accomplish elsewhere. We need to stop thinking of Latin America as the U.S. “backyard” that is outside broader, global strategic concerns.

**Independently, the OAS is key to enforce arms control – it’s the only way to prevent a South American arms race**

**Herz, 8** – Director, Institute of International Relations, Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (Monica, “DOES THE ORGANISATION OF AMERICAN STATES MATTER?”, Institute of International Relations, April 2008, Google Books) MR

The idea of arms control is not explicitly present in the Charter, but slowly entered the inter-American security environment in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1974, eight Latin American governments issued the Ayacuchu Declaration,19 affirming their support for the idea of arms control, and the Hemispheric Security Committee has taken on this subject. The Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Production and Traffic of Arms, Ammunition, Explosives and related Materials of 1997 expresses the link between the arms control agenda and the new prominence of the concept of cooperative security. On June 7, 1999, the OAS General Assembly in Guatemala adopted a landmark Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions. By June 2003, the Convention was signed by twenty OAS member states – all major hemispheric conventional weapons importers and exporters. The Contadora group mentioned earlier, the Ayacucho Declaration, the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the treaties that ended the nuclear dispute between Argentina and Brazil introduced the CSBM agenda, launched at the 1975 Helsinki Conference, to Latin America (Rodrigues 1999; Rojas 1996). The 1995 war between Peru and Ecuador reminded Latin American leaders that the pending territorial disputes in the region, a legacy of the nineteenth century demarcation process, could be ignited into an actual **exchange of fire**. The US government, moving in the 1990s towards a more multilateral approach in the region, and the democratisation of Latin American countries permitted the introduction of the confidence-building agenda. In addition, the concern with the nature of civil-military relations in Latin America, given the region’s history of military intervention in public administration, and the search for new roles and identities for the military led local elites to acquire greater interest in the subject. In the 1990s the states in the hemisphere turned to the OAS as a catalyst for confidence building. The OAS has organised and sponsored conferences on confidence- and security-building measures, designed to strengthen military-to-military relations, deal with historic rivalries and tensions and create an environment that permits the governments of the region to modernise their defence forces without triggering suspicions from neighbours or leading to an **arms race**.

**South American arms race causes great power war**

**MIT, 9** – cites Licio da Silva: Astrophysicist at the Observatorio Nacional de Río de Janeiro, Brasil (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, “The ABC’s of Nuclear Disarmament in Latin America”, MIT OpenCourseWare, Spring 2009, http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/political-science/17-951-nuclear-weapons-in-international-politics-past-present-and-future-spring-2009/projects/MIT17\_951S09\_abcs.pdf)

There are several resources that indicate that Latin American political scientists were worried about the effect nuclear weapons would have on the region. Several theorists believed that the introduction of even the hint of a weapons program would make the entire region paranoid and further increase a state's incentive to produce a bomb. Other theorists view the development of nuclear weapons in the region as a risk in that it draws attention from the rest of 2 "los conceptos de equilibrio intrarregional y de confianza entre los países de la región (Portales 25)" 9 the world onto Latin America. This unwanted attention could lead to disastrous affects for the region if any country was perceived as a threat to any of the greater superpowers. Security perception motivates a country's weapons development. Carlos Portales discusses how the introduction of a new weapon to the Latin American region has a "contagious" effect; first one country has it and then the rest of them struggle to obtain it. If any country is perceived to be looking or developing a new weapon, all countries will follow in order to keep the balance of power within the region. The introduction of a new weapon limits any arms control treaties until all countries possess the new weapon (Mercado Jarrín; Portales 27). In his article "Consequences of a Nuclear Conflict for the Climate in South America," Licio da Silva3 describes the consequences to South America if there were to be a nuclear attack on North America. He calls this the "Optimistic Hipothesis [sic]" for South America and calculates population death by smoke in the atmosphere. His "Pessimistic Hipothesis [sic]" involves attacks on South American cities and the destruction that could be cause, he even takes into account the possibility of the Amazon going up in flames. His article is quite alarming and one can see that he is truly terrified at the possibilities. As a conclusion, he calls for countries to be prepared for the worse and for the region to try and avoid international conflict by not obtaining nuclear weapons. da Silva states that if no South American country possesses a nuclear weapon, then no nuclear weapon state should perceive South America as a threat. If a Latin American state were to have a nuclear weapon, then that country could be perceived as a threat and thus could be targeted in an international conflict if it is seen as taking sides: "When a country becomes the owner of a nuclear arsenal, it also becomes a potential target (da Silva 56)." Therefore, da Silva calls for Latin American countries to remain disarmed so as not to put the 3 Astrophysicist at the Observatorio Nacional de Río de Janeiro- Brasil10 region in peril. His directly names Argentina and Brazil for their involvement in nuclear weapons programs and accuses them of putting the entire region at risk: This shows the temerity of Argentine and Brazilian military who are in favour of the possession of nuclear weapons in their respective countries; we believe that the price we would have to pay for the dubious pride of belonging to the small group of nations in possession of nuclear technology for military purposes is too high. Here we see a sincere fear of the security risks that one country can pose on an entire region. For da Silva, the destabilizing effect that nuclear weapons would have on South America alarm him enough to single out the two countries and negatively describe their search for nuclear weapons as "dubious pride." He continues on to ask for "the commitment not to install any nuclear arms in their [South American's] territory (da Silva 56)." The use of the word "their" refers to a collective identity shared by those in South America. Military improvements of individual countries should not be as important as the well being of the entire region. South Americans countries are lumped together and thus, must take into account the entire region before pursuing precarious programs. An arms race in the region would affect all countries in Latin America since such an arms race "contributes to increase both international tensions and the danger of armed conflicts, in addition to diverting resources indispensable to the economic and social progress of the peoples of the world. (Brazil and the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons 19)." One country's search for nuclear weapons or even nuclear power, increases all the other countries' likelihood to obsess, overreact or become hostile during the situation. Regions that are economically dependent on each other, such as South America, **would have a very hard time surviving if there existed no trust between the nations.**

**And, multilateralism leads to greater power sharing and international cooperation, resolving conflict**

**Pouliot, 11** — Professor of Political Science at McGill University (Vincent, “Multilateralism as an End in Itself”, International Studies Perspectives (2011) 12, 18–26) NG

Because it rests on open, nondiscriminatory debate, and the routine exchange of viewpoints, the multilateral procedure introduces three key advantages that are gained, regardless of the specific policies adopted, and tend to diffuse across all participants. Contrary to the standard viewpoint, according to which a rational preference or functional imperative lead to multilateral cooperation, here it is the systematic practice of multilateralism that creates the **drive to cooperate**. At the theoretical level, the premise is that it is not only what people think that explains what they do, but also what they do that determines what they think (Pouliot 2010). Everyday multilateralism is a self-fulfilling practice for at least three reasons. First, the joint practice of multilateralism creates mutually recognizable [and] patterns of action among global actors. This process owes to the fact that practices structure social interaction (Adler and Pouliot forthcoming).2 Because they are meaningful, organized, and repeated, practices generally convey a degree of mutual intelligibility that allows people to develop social relations over time. In the field of international security, for example, the practice of deterrence is premised on a limited number of gestures, signals, and linguistic devices that are meant, as Schelling (1966:113) put it, to ‘‘getting the right signal across.’’ The same goes with the practice of multilateralism, which rests on a set of political and social patterns that establish the boundaries of action in a mutually intelligible fashion. These structuring effects, in turn, allow for the development of **common frameworks** for appraising global events. Multilateral dialog serves not only to find joint solutions; it also makes it possible for various actors to zoom in on the definition of the issue at hand—a particularly important step on the global stage. The point is certainly not that the multilateral procedure leads everybody to agree on everything—that would be as impossible as counterproductive. Theoretically speaking, there is room for skepticism that multilateralism may ever allow communicative rationality at the global level (see Risse 2000; Diez and Steans 2005). With such a diverse and uneven playing field, one can doubt that discursive engagement, in and of itself, can lead to common lifeworlds. Instead, what the practice of multilateralism fosters is the emergence of a shared framework of interaction—for example, a common linguistic repertoire—that allows global actors to make sense of world politics in mutually recognizable ways. Of course, they may not agree on the specific actions to be taken, but at least they can build on an established pattern of political interaction to deal with the problem at hand—sometimes even before it emerges in acute form. In today’s pluralistic world, that would already be a considerable achievement. In that sense, multilateralism may well be a constitutive practice of what Lu (2009) calls ‘‘political friendship among peoples.’’ The axiomatic practice of principled and inclusive dialog is quite apparent in the way she describes this social structure: ‘‘While conflicts, especially over the distribution of goods and burdens, will inevitably arise, under conditions of political friendship among peoples, they will be negotiated within a global background context of norms and institutions based on mutual recognition, equity in the distribution of burdens and benefits of global **cooperation, and power-sharing** in the institutions of global governance rather than domination by any group’’ (2009:54–55). In a world where multilateralism becomes an end in itself, this ideal pattern emerges out of the structuring effects of axiomatic practice: take the case of NATO, for instance, which has recently had to manage, through the multilateral practice, fairly strong internal dissent (Pouliot 2006). While clashing views and interests will never go away in our particularly diverse world, as pessimists are quick to emphasize (for example, Dahl 1999), the management of discord is certainly made easier by shared patterns of dialog based on mutually recognizable frameworks. Second, the multilateral procedure typically ensures a remarkable level of **moderation** in the global policies adopted. In fact, a quick historical tour d’horizon suggests that actors engaged in multilateralism tend to **avoid radical solutions** in their joint decision making. Of course, the very process of uniting disparate voices helps explain why multilateralism tends to produce median consensus. This is not to say that the multilateral practice inevitably leads to lowest common denominators. To repeat, because it entails complex and often painstaking debate before any actions are taken, the multilateral procedure forces involved actors to devise and potentially share **similar analytical lenses** that, in hindsight, make the policies adopted seem inherently, and seemingly ‘‘naturally,’’ moderate. This is because the debate about what a given policy means takes place before its implementation, which makes for a much smoother ride when decisions hit the ground. This joint interpretive work, which constitutes a crucial aspect of multilateralism, creates outcomes that are generally perceived as inherently reasonable. Participation brings inherent benefits to politics, as Bachrach (1975) argued in the context of democratic theory. Going after the conventional liberal view according to which actors enter politics with an already fixed set of preferences, Bachrach observes that most of the time people define their interests in the very process of participation. The argument is not that interests formed in the course of social interaction are in any sense more altruistic. It rather is that the nature and process of political practices, in this case multilateralism, matter a great deal in shaping participants’ preferences (Wendt 1999). In this sense, not only does the multilateral practice have structuring effects on global governance, but it is also constitutive of what actors say, want, and do (Adler and Pouliot forthcoming). Third and related, multilateralism lends **legitimacy** to the policies that it generates by virtue of the debate that the process necessarily entails. There is no need here to explain at length how deliberative processes that are inclusive of all stakeholders tend to produce outcomes that are generally considered more socially and politically acceptable. In the long run, the large ownership also leads to more **efficient implementation**, because actors feel **invested** in the enactment of solutions on the ground. Even episodes of political failure, such as the lack of UN reaction to the Rwandan genocide, can generate useful lessons when re-appropriated multilaterally—think of the Responsibility to Protect, for instance.3 From this outlook, there is no contradiction between efficiency and the axiomatic practice of multilateralism, quite the contrary. The more multilateralism becomes the normal or self-evident practice of global governance, the more benefits it yields for the many stakeholders of global governance. In fact, multilateralism as an end in and of itself could generate even more diffuse reciprocity than Ruggie had originally envisioned. Not only do its distributional consequences tend to even out, multilateralism as a global governance routine also creates **self-reinforcing dynamics** and new focal points for strategic interaction. The axiomatic practice of multilateralism helps define problems in commensurable ways and craft moderate solutions with wide-ranging ownership—three processual benefits that further strengthen the impetus for multilateral dialog. Pg. 21-23

**Multilateralism solves inevitable Asian transition wars that go nuclear**

**Kugler, 6 –** Professor of World Politics at Claremont Graduate University (Jacek, “The Asian Ascent: Opportunity for Peace or Precondition for War?”, <http://sobek.colorado.edu/~lewiso/Kugler%20-%20The%20Asian%20Ascent.pdf>) NG

Given the fundamental importance of demographic and economic forces in establishing the roster of states capable of fundamentally affecting the structure of world politics, whatever resolution there might be to the Global War on Terror will not alter the major challenge faced by the United States. In the long run, China’s demographic and hence economic power cannot be denied. By the same reasoning, the Middle East has no long-run demographic or economic power. The U.S. courts long-term peril by being obsessively distracted by short-term objectives. To ensure real peace, the U.S. would be much better advised to preserve strong links with the EU, maintain and improve cordial relations with Russia, and most importantly, open a sincere dialogue with India and China designed to maximize their support for the existing status quo. To be sure, positive, but limited, steps have been taken by the United States. American support for China’s entry into the World Trade Organization was important because it helps integrate China’s growing economy more fully into the capitalist world economy. Similar recognition for India, not to mention support for Indian membership on the United Nations Security Council, would also be beneﬁcial. Because Taiwan and Korea have replaced the Cold War’s Berlin as focal points for potential Great Power conﬂict, ﬁnding an accommodation that meets the desires of the main parties with respect to them is central to the preservation of long-term peace. The economic, demographic, and political science research summarized above suggests that American foreign policy attention must center on China and India as the major future contenders for global leadership. Although China retains a political ideology inconsistent with democracy, there are good reasons to expect and thus to work toward change to a participatory system based on increasing prosperity (Feng 2003; Feng and Zak 2003). India is the largest democracy in the world, but like China it is still not a major partner of the Western world. While these relationships may develop and prosper on their own, the relative amount of attention paid to these rising giants compared with the Global War on Terror is simply insupportable. Neither convergence arguments nor power transition theory suggests that future Great Power war between Asia and the West is inevitable. The research described here offers evidence about probabilistic relationships between parity and status quo evaluations on the one hand, and war on the other. Thus, while China’s overtaking of the U.S. may be relatively certain, the result of that overtaking is not. Power transition research supports claims that overtakings are dangerous when policy makers fail to accommodate them. A conﬂict between China or India and the United States as the Asian giants emerge from the shadows of underdevelopment is **not inevitable**. Rather, the political negotiations among contenders determine whether potential challengers can be made satisﬁed with the rules and norms governing world politics. If the declining dominant state is able to engineer a satisfactory compromise between the demands of the rising state and its own requirements (as Britain and the U.S. did when peacefully passing the mantle of international leadership), war is not expected. If the two sides remain intransigent, **war is expected**. It is clear that such a war in the twenty-ﬁrst century would have a **very high probability** of involving **nuclear weapons**. A clear counterexpectation can be drawn from classical nuclear deterrence arguments. They involve a fundamental assumption that as the costs of war increase, the probability of war decreases. Nuclear weapons are then alleged to alter calculations substantially because they raise the expected costs of war so high that war becomes unthinkable. According to this logic, a global war between a newly predominant China and a declining U.S. will never occur thanks to the pacifying inﬂuence of the balance of terror. A new Cold War is anticipated by this nuclear deterrence argument. Consistent with this theory, various scholars have advocated the proliferation of nuclear weapons as one method to prevent wars (Intriligator and Brito 1981; Waltz 1981; Bueno de Mesquita and Riker 1982). An odd paradox is raised by the fact that many world leaders accept nuclear deterrence claims, such as that about the stability of mutual assured destruction (MAD), while rejecting the logical concomitant that proliferation of nuclear weapons to more and more states is desirable. What follows logically has stubbornly resisted practical implementation. Thus, using some other logic, leaders of nuclear nations seem to agree that deterrence is stable under MAD but nevertheless also agree that nuclear proliferation must be prevented in order to preserve peace. If decision makers really believed MAD is stable, it is impossible to understand why they would oppose nuclear proliferation to Iran, thereby creating stable nuclear parity in the Middle East. This inconsistency was noted years ago by Rosen (1977), but subsequently conveniently overlooked. Theory and policy may frequently be at odds, but seldom when the costs of such logical inconsistency are so high. Power transition theorists are inherently suspicious of MAD arguments about nuclear stability because they essentially resurrect traditional balance of power arguments. Rather than focusing on conventional balance as a pacifying inﬂuence, nuclear deterrence proponents of MAD suggest that a nuclear balance will maintain the peace. Given a fortuitous absence of wars among nuclear states thus far, it is impossible to test arguments such as that about MAD. But what we can observe is not promising. It is not only policy makers who doubt the veracity of MAD when they deny the logical consequence of ‘‘beneﬁcial’’ proliferation. Recent formal presentations of deterrence arguments strongly suggest that a preponderance of nuclear capabilities specifically in the possession of satisﬁed states is more amenable to peace than is MAD (Zagare and Kilgour 2000). Power transition theorists, informed by their own as well as by **decades** of demographic and economic research, strongly doubt that nuclear parity between the U.S. and a risen but dissatisﬁed China could preserve the peace. Conclusions It is entirely reasonable to anticipate that Asia will dominate world politics by the end of the century. The most important issue facing American decision makers is how to handle the anticipated overtaking. The research summarized here indicates that the one element of Asia’s ascent that Western decision makers can manipulate is Asia’s relative acceptance of the international system’s existing norms and values. War is not an inevitable certainty. The opportunity for peace is at hand. If Western decision makers can persuade Chinese and Indian leaders through word and deed to join with the current global status quo, peace and prosperity should endure. If, on the other hand, China and India cannot be persuaded to join the existing structure of relations, then the chances for conﬂict increase around mid-century. The research summarized here suggests this is true even in the face of the enormous costs that reasonably would be anticipated from a nuclear war.

## plan

**The United States federal government should normalize trade relations with the Republic of Cuba.**

## solvency

**Lifting the embargo alone doesn’t result in trade – the U.S. must normalize relations with Cuba to solve**

**French, 9** – Director for the U.S.-Cuba Policy Initiative at the New America Foundation, former Senior Fellow with the Lexington Institute (Anya Landau, “Options for Engagement A Resource Guide for Reforming U.S. Policy toward Cuba”, Lexington Institute, April 2009, http://www.lexingtoninstitute.org/library/resources/documents/Cuba/USPolicy/options-for-engagement.pdf)

the path to “normal” trade relations¶ If the United States were to lift its trade embargo against Cuba, this would not automatically confer “normal” status to the bilateral trade relationship. It would mean that the United States and Cuba have the opportunity to begin trading in more goods and services than they have in the last fifty years. Whether much expanded trade actually occurs depends on whether the United States were to take additional steps beyond lifting the embargo: the most important of which is the provision of Normal Trade Relations (NTR). ¶ NTR is a technical term which refers to the provision of nondiscriminatory treatment toward trading partners. Cuba and North Korea are the only two countries to which the United States continues to deny “normal trade relations.” All other countries either have permanent normal trade relations or temporary, renewable normal trade relations with the United States.161¶ Assuming that the Cuba-specific trade sanctions contained in the Cuban Assets Control Regulations (the continuity of which was codified by the 1996 Helms-Burton Act) were to be eliminated, achieving normal trade relations between Cuba and the United States would not be a simple matter. A first stumbling block could be the 1974 Trade Act provision dubbed “Jackson-Vanik,” which prohibits non-market economy countries from receiving normal tariff treatment, entering into a bilateral commercial agreement, or receiving any U.S. government credits or loan guarantees, until the President has reported to Congress that such a country does not: 1) deny its citizens the right to emigrate, 2) impose an unreasonable tax or fine for emigrating, and 3) impose more than a “nominal tax, levy, fine, fee or other charge on any citizen as a consequence of the desire of such citizen to emigrate to the country of his choice.”162¶ Thus, Cuba’s restrictions on its citizens’ emigration rights pose an obstacle to normalization of bilateral trade. Only once the requirements set forth by the Jackson-Vanik amendment have been met, (and absent any other Cuba-specific sanctions, such as the Export Administration Act controls on countries found to be supporting international terrorism), could the United States begin negotiations of a bilateral commercial agreement with Cuba. ¶ To begin to extend normal trade relations to Cuba, the United States would need to enter into a reciprocal trade agreement with Cuba (not equivalent to a “free trade agreement”) that would provide a balance of trade benefits and protections to U.S. exports and commercial entities doing business with Cuba, at the same time it would provide such benefits to Cuba. Such an agreement would need to include protection for U.S. patents and trademarks and for “industrial rights and processes,” include a safeguard mechanism to prevent market disruptions due to trade, and provide that the agreement, and its continuation, be subject to the national security interests of both parties.163 Assuming bilateral relations had reached the appropriate milestones to begin discussing two-way trade, negotiating such an agreement could potentially take years, as both countries would need to adopt statutory and regulatory changes.

**Current reforms don’t stabilize Cuba’s economy – direct engagement is necessary**

**Laverty and Stephens, 11** – \*Center for Democracy in the Americas AND \*\*Executive Director of the Center for Democracy (Collin, Sarah, “Cuba’s New Resolve Economic Reform and Its Implications for U.S. Policy”, Center for Democracy in the Americas, 2011, http://democracyinamericas.org/pdfs/CDA\_Cubas\_New\_Resolve.pdf)

Will the Reforms Work?¶ There are game-changing events outside of Cuba’s control that can negatively affect the future success of the reforms. Cuba’s economic reforms cannot insulate the island from hurricanes, global fluctuations in food prices, nickel prices, and tourism flows, or the risk that Venezuela’s voters or their president’s poor health will sever the lifeline of petroleum that flows from Caracas to Havana. Within Cuba’s control, however, is whether the program can substantively achieve the ambitious goals set out by the Guidelines, and whether the leadership will see the process through, and bring the Cuban people along, during a period that is likely to be painful and uncertain. It is critically important that Cuba is liberalizing the rules. But, the prospects for success should not be exaggerated. The reforms announced and implemented to date are unlikely to be sufficient to overcome all of Cuba’s economic problems. Not every Cuban who is laid-off will be able to form his or her own business or find alternative employment. Not every Cuban has the skill to be self-employed or to work in an enterprise created and run by others.115 Most lack the capital or training required to start or manage such businesses. Many will continue to rely on support from relatives abroad and do jobs that are not a part of the formal economy to get by. Even though Cubans have historically learned entrepreneurial skills just to make ends meet, they still face problems—identified by observers including the Cuba Study Group,116 Dr. Archibald Ritter, Dr. Manuel Orozco and others—that make forming a business and running it profitably really difficult. Dr. Orozco explained, “The 178 [licensed] activities pertain predominantly to the service industry, yet these activities have severe limitations. For example, there are provisions to establish a paladar, but not a food manufacturing enterprise. If an entrepreneur wants to establish a manufacturing business in the food sector, such as building a food processing factory, she will need to hire cooking experts, health quality testers, marketing officials, a raw material food buyer, an accountant with legal skills to meet all regulations. The country still doesn’t have the incentives to motivate a [Cuban] national to invest $50,000 … to carry out such an enterprise, yet it will have a larger, multiplying effect than a paladar. Enterprises like this can be food suppliers to the paladars and motivate greater competition.”117 Such findings have led Dr. Ritter among others to conclude that there is a low probability of sufficient job creation by the micro-enterprise and cooperative sectors to absorb 1,000,000 Cuban workers in the next few years, and that further liberalization will be necessary.118¶ More broadly, Adam Hersh, an economist at the Center for American Progress, and a scholar of economic transitions in China and Vietnam, told CDA: “The reforms proposed with respect to layoffs and self-employment and the end to the libreta are economically important … and likely to deliver general welfare benefits through improved access to goods and services. But so far the reforms envisioned will do little to address Cuba’s fundamental economic problems in the productive structure of the Cuban economy: inefficiency, low productivity, and antiquated capital stock. Cuba’s challenge will be to tackle this next stage of reform while preserving its high level of development in health and education.”119¶ Cuba needs foreign exchange to import capital goods from abroad. Without it, the island cannot create wealth beyond the retail sector in ways that utilize Cubans and newly-legalized small businesses. Today, no clear avenue to increased foreign exchange is open, and agriculture reforms have yet to reduce Cuba’s import bill. Similarly, no clear direction exists for large businesses on questions such as production, investment, or how much latitude managers will have to make productivity decisions. Experts tell us this is not a question of private versus public—as reforms in China have demonstrated—but about whether the system, however it is constructed, will allow entrepreneurial and economically rational decisions to be made

**Only unconditional removal solves – the embargo empowers the regime and it has an incentive to reject conditional removal**

Vivanco, 6 – LLM from Harvard Law School, Americas director of Humans Rights Watch (Jose Miguel, “Restraint, not force, will bring change to Cuba”, Humans Rights Watch, 12/22/06, http://www.hrw.org/news/2006/12/21/restraint-not-force-will-bring-change-cuba, Google Scholar) KW

This reluctance would be understandable but misguided. Most Cubans do want change. If they do not call for it after Mr Castro's death, it will be largely for the same reason they did not during his lifetime: the country's repressive machinery, which ruined countless lives, remains intact today.¶ If the international community misreads this silence, it will miss a historic opportunity. Immediately after Mr Castro's death, the Cuban government will be more vulnerable to pressure for change than ever before. Raúl Castro, who has already taken over the reigns of power, may wield the same old instruments of repression. But he will not enjoy his brother's revolutionary stature, which at times has been as vital as the repression for perpetuating the regime. This window of opportunity is unlikely to last. Raul Castro may never match his brother's unique combination of personal charisma and political cunning; yet, he could easily acquire the other trait that Fidel exploited so effectively: the heroic image of the Latin American David confronting the US Goliath.¶ Whether Raúl Castro can claim the "David" role will depend largely on Washington. He will be virtually guaranteed the part if the Bush administration stays the 40–year course of unilateral embargo and unconditional ultimatum. It is hard to think of a policy that has a longer track record of failure. Cuba is no more open now than when the embargo was first imposed four decades ago. If anything, the policy consolidated Mr Castro's hold by giving his government an excuse for its problems and a pretext for its abuses. Moreover, because the policy was imposed in such heavy–handed fashion, it enabled Mr Castro to garner sympathy abroad, neutralising international pressure rather than increasing it. While other governments may have been concerned about political repression in Cuba, they were unwilling to be seen as siding with a bully.¶ To its credit, the Bush administration responded to news of Mr Castro's decline in August with surprising restraint, with President George W. Bush saying Cuba's citizens should determine their future. But if Washington hopes for influence in Cuba, it must do much more. First, it will need to lift the embargo. Nothing short of this will work, not even the "calibrated response" espoused by the Clinton administration, in which the US would ease the embargo in response to Cuban reforms. Why would the Cuban government make concessions when the embargo helps keep it in power?¶ Yet, it would be naïve to think the embargo's end would prompt the Cuban government to change its ways. Instead, a more measured and multilateral approach is needed, in which other governments in the region take the lead in pressing Cuba to respect political freedoms. Finding allies willing to assume this role will not be easy. But it may be the only hope for real change. By making the effort, the US could begin to reverse the dynamic that helped keep Mr Castro in power. Only when the US stops acting like Goliath will Cuba stop looking like David.

**Now is key – confluence of factors give engagement momentum in both countries**

**LeoGrande, 13** – professor in the Department of Government, School of Public Affairs at American University (William M., “The Danger of Dependence: Cuba's Foreign Policy After Chavez”, World Politics Review, 4/2/13, http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/12840/the-danger-of-dependence-cubas-foreign-policy-after-chavez) MR

In his first public statement after assuming Cuba's presidency in 2006, Raúl Castro held out an olive branch to Washington, declaring his readiness to sit down and negotiate the differences between the two countries. Obama came to office in 2009 declaring that U.S. policy toward Cuba amounted to 50 years of failure and that it was "time to try something new." The stage appeared set for a tectonic shift in U.S.-Cuban relations, long locked in a state of perpetual hostility. Obama took some early steps that augured well. In April 2009, he ended restrictions on Cuban-American remittances and family travel and subsequently eased regulations limiting cultural and academic exchange. At Washington's initiative, the United States and Cuba resumed bilateral talks on migration, suspended by President George W. Bush in 2004. The two governments also began discussions on other issues of mutual interest, such as Coast Guard cooperation and drug interdiction. But the momentum in Washington soon dissipated in the face of more pressing foreign policy priorities, opposition from Congress, even among some Democrats, and resistance from an inertial State Department bureaucracy more comfortable with the familiar policy of the past -- its failure notwithstanding -- than the risk of trying something new. As a former senior State Department official explained, high-visibility foreign policy changes of this magnitude only happen if the president demands that they happen, and Obama's attention was focused elsewhere. In December 2009, Cuba's arrest of Alan Gross, a consultant for the U.S. Agency for International Development's "democracy promotion" programs, brought all progress to a halt. At the end of Obama's first term, relations with Cuba were not much better than at the start. Obama is known to be **frustrated by the impasse** and **willing to make another effort** to break through it in his second term. With no need for the president to worry about re-election, and the Cuban American community embracing more-moderate policies, domestic politics pose less of an obstacle than at any time since the end of the Cold War. Senior members of Obama's foreign policy team, including John Kerry at the State Department and Chuck Hagel at the Defense Department, are on record favoring better relations. In Cuba, Raúl Castro's historic economic reforms are moving the island toward a mixed socialist economy, and incipient political decompression is allowing more space for open debate. These changes, undertaken in response to domestic necessity rather than U.S. demands, are nevertheless moving Cuba in directions long cited by Washington as necessary for better relations. To exert any positive influence on the trajectory of Cuba's evolution, however, Washington has to engage not just with Cuban society but with Cuba's government. Eager to put Cuba on a more solid footing before passing the torch to the next generation of leaders, Raúl Castro seems **genuinely interested** in opening talks with Washington. Unlike his older brother, Raúl did not make his political career by mobilizing nationalist sentiment against the United States. He has a strong incentive to settle this conflict so he can focus on renovating the Cuban economy and open it up to U.S. trade and investment. With Cuba in the midst of profound and perilous economic reforms, Venezuela's suddenly uncertain political future complicates Raúl Castro's plans by posing unforeseen and uncontrollable risks. Cuba's success over the past two decades at rebuilding political and economic ties to Europe, Asia and Latin America gives it some breathing space, but the pace of change in Cuba may well depend upon the durability of Chavismo in Venezuela. For Castro, better relations with the United States means one less problem to complicate the process of pulling the Cuban economy into the 21st century. For Obama, the changes underway in Cuba offer an opportunity to move beyond this one last vestige of the Cold War.

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## cooperation

**That promotes band-wagoning and international coalitions, strengthening leadership**

**Ikenberry and Kupchan, 4 –** (John Ikenberry and Charles Kupchan, “Liberal Realism: The Foundations of a Democratic Foreign Policy,” National Interest (Fall 2004))

It is misguided, however, to assume that America's preponderant power, when combined with an assertive unilateralism, promotes stability as a matter of course. As the record of the past four years makes clear, the unfettered exercise of U.S. primacy has not led to deference and bandwagoning, but to resentment and incipient balancing. The problem is not unipolarity per se, but changes in the exercise of U.S. power that have in turn changed foreign perceptions of U.S. intentions and how the United States will use its preponderant strength. A dominant America that reassures others and deploys its power to secure public goods induces systemic stability; unfettered primacy deployed in the exclusive pursuit of national self-interest does the opposite.¶ The Bush Administration's grand strategy rests on a second geopolitical misconception: that U.S. primacy is durable. To be sure, America's economic and military might ensures that it will remain the world's leading nation for decades to come. But current power asymmetries will inevitably diminish in the years ahead. The European Union's wealth already rivals that of the United States, and it may well forge a more independent and unified security policy as this decade proceeds. Over the course of the next decade, Japan may tire of always following America's lead, China will emerge as a major power, and Russia, India and Brazil are poised to become stronger and more assertive players. It will be impossible for the United States to sustain current power, asymmetries. Indeed, if America seeks to preserve unipolarity and its attendant sway over global affairs, it will only ensure that other centers of power, as they rise, array their strength against the United States.¶ Finally, the Bush Administration has overestimated the advantages of military superiority and mistaken brute strength for influence, producing adverse consequences on a number of fronts. In Iraq, Washington was correct that Saddam Hussein's regime would crumble under the U.S. onslaught, but it failed to appreciate that the invasion would spawn a dangerous mix of nationalism and religious extremism, leaving the United States struggling against a guerrilla insurgency that effectively neutralized America's military might. In similar fashion, the Bush Administration is aware that its unilateralist bent has provoked **anti-American sentiment** in many quarters, but it has discounted the discontent because countries opposed to U.S. policy do not have the military wherewithal to stand in America's way.¶ Although it is correct that other countries are not forming alliances against the United States, Washington is overlooking the more subtle forms of balancing that are occurring--with potent geopolitical consequence. The broad coalition that blocked UN authorization of the Iraq War denied the United States the legitimacy of international approval, substantially raising the economic and political costs of the war. Allies bore 90 percent of the costs of the Gulf War, but the American taxpayer has financed most of the current operation, and Washington has been unable to convince key allies to send troops to Iraq. If the United States continues on its current course, it will enjoy military supremacy, but little else.¶ FROM THE perspective of liberal realism, management of the global balance of power would be based on three propositions. First, the United States must wield its superior strength in concert with others to ensure that it forestalls rather than invites balancing behavior. Re-establishing America's bona tides as a benign hegemon necessitates **resuscitating the alliances, institutions and consultations that have eroded** under Bush's watch. The United States should of course reserve the fight to act alone as a last resort, hut Washington must rediscover that the costs of unilateral action usually far exceed the costs of seeking consensus.¶ Second, liberal realism entails moving with--rather than against--the secular diffusion of global power. The scope of American primacy will wane as this century progresses; the ultimate objective should be to channel rising centers of strength into cooperative partnerships with the United States. Furthermore, strength elsewhere, even if it comes at the expense of America's relative power, **need not come at the expense of its influence and security**. If rising centers of power are integrated into a rule-based order, they promise to be net contributors to international stability. Americans would benefit substantially from a Europe that is capable of projecting power outside its neighborhood and sharing risks and responsibilities with the United States. China is emerging as one of Asia's dominant states; what is in question is not whether its power will rise, but the ends to which it will use its growing strength.¶ Third, liberal realism rests on a multidimensional understanding of power, sensitive to the fact that America's military supremacy, although a vital element of national strength, is not sufficient to safeguard American security. The United States should continue to invest in its armed forces and maintain its pronounced military advantage, but absent respect for U.S. leadership abroad, U.S. primacy does more to divide the world than to unite it. Washington needs to renew the non-military dimensions of its global influence, working to reclaim its moral authority abroad and to make disaffected allies again feel like stakeholders in the international system.¶

## stability

**Coast Guard is critical to maintaining Iraqi economic stability – it’s the only agency that can guard Iraqi oil reserves**

Hull et al., 3 – Vice Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard; Cari Thomas: Commander, U.S. Coast Guard; Joe Direnzo III: U.S. Coast Guard (Peter J., “What Was the Coast Guard Doing at Iraq?”, Military, August 2003, http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,NI\_Iraq\_0803,00.html) EK

Ensuring the unfettered flow of commerce, both import and export, is critical to most national economies. In Iraq, preserving oil resources for that **nation's economic future** was an important objective in extending the peace. Just 13 miles off the Iraqi coast, 39 Coast Guard reservists secured the Mina-al-Bakr offshore oil terminals in the opening phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom. More than a million barrels of oil a day flowed through this terminal before the war. The Coast Guard's action will help ensure continuation of the flow, a major source of income that will aid in the reconstitution of Iraq. Placing navigation aids in approaches and harbors is important for the safe navigation of the ships that import and export goods. In a postconflict environment, the aids- to-navigation program is an essential military mission, which currently **only the Coast Guard is able to perform**. The Walnut demonstrated this expeditionary capability in support of Iraqi Freedom, maintaining the 41-mile navigable channel heading from Iraq's primary southern port, Umm Qasr, to the sea. Because of years of neglect, the buoys along this route were in a terrible state of repair or had been removed. The Walnut provided a well-marked channel for humanitarian aid arrivals, vital to coalition objectives. In all cases, establishing a well-maintained seaway provided greater safety and security for mariners transiting to these ports.

**Iraqi economic instability escalates to World War 3**

Ferguson, 6 – Professor of History at Harvard University (Niall, “The Next War of the World”, Foreign Affairs, September-October 2006, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/61916/niall-ferguson/the-next-war-of-the-world)

What makes the escalating civil war in Iraq so disturbing is that it has the potential to spill over into neighboring countries. The Iranian government is already taking more than a casual interest in the politics of post-Saddam Iraq. And yet Iran, with its Sunni and Kurdish minorities, is no more homogeneous than Iraq. Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria cannot be expected to look on insouciantly if the Sunni minority in central Iraq begins to lose out to what may seem to be an Iranian-backed tyranny of the majority. The recent history of Lebanon offers a reminder that in the Middle East there is no such thing as a contained civil war. Neighbors are always likely to take an unhealthy interest in any country with fissiparous tendencies. The obvious conclusion is that **a new "war of the world" may already be brewing** in a region that, incredible though it may seem, has yet to sate its appetite for violence. And the **ramifications of such a Middle Eastern conflagration would be truly global**. Economically, the world would have to contend with oil at above $100 a barrel. Politically, those countries in western Europe with substantial Muslim populations might also find themselves affected as sectarian tensions radiated outward. Meanwhile, the ethnic war between Jews and Arabs in Israel, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank shows no sign of abating. Is it credible that the United States will remain unscathed if the Middle East erupts? Although such an outcome may seem to be a low-probability, nightmare scenario, it is already more likely than the scenario of enduring peace in the region. If the history of the twentieth century is any guide, **only economic stabilization** and a credible reassertion of U.S. authority are likely to halt the drift toward chaos. Neither is a likely prospect. On the contrary, the speed with which responsibility for security in Iraq is being handed over to the predominantly Shiite and Kurdish security forces may accelerate the descent into internecine strife. Significantly, the audio statement released by Osama bin Laden in June excoriated not only the American-led "occupiers" of Iraq but also "certain sectors of the Iraqi people -- those who refused [neutrality] and stood to fight on the side of the crusaders." His allusions to "rejectionists," "traitors," and "agents of the Americans" were clearly intended to justify al Qaeda's policy of targeting Iraq's Shiites. The war of the worlds that H. G. Wells imagined never came to pass. But a war of the world did. The sobering possibility we urgently need to confront is that another global conflict is brewing today -- centered not on Poland or Manchuria, but more likely on Palestine and Mesopotamia.

**Link non-unique – the US already lifted agricultural sanctions against Cuba**

**Perales et al. 10** – Senior Program Associate of the Latin American Program at the Wilson Center (José Raúl, “The United States and Cuba: Implications of an Economic Relationship,” Wilson Center, August 2010, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/LAP\_Cuba\_Implications.pdf)//Bwang

The last decade has been marked by a significant growth in economic ties between the United States and Cuba, a response to the partial relaxation of certain embargo restrictions, explained José Raúl Perales, Senior Program Associate of the Latin American Program. This has been particularly true within the agriculture and tourism industries. For instance, in 2000 the United States implemented the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act; in the following eight years bilateral agricultural trade and farm sales more than tripled. Furthermore, since 2003, the United States has supplied annually more agricultural products to Cuba than any other nation; from 2003 to 2008 an estimated 35 percent of Cuba’s agricultural imports came from the United States. In terms of tourism, it is estimated that, by eliminating current restrictions on U.S. travel to Cuba, the island nation could expect 500,000 to one million tourism-related U.S. visits per annum. This would not only be a boost to the U.S. travel industry, it would also fundamentally transform the landscape of the entire Caribbean tourism industry. These data hint at the many benefits to a deeper U.S. Cuban economic relationship.

**The plan solves the impact – engagement creates a framework for environmental protection – it will be modeled and protect biodiversity globally**

**Conell, 9**-Research Associate at COHA (Christina, “The U.S. and Cuba: Destined to be an Environmental Duo?”, Council on Hemispheric Affairs, 6/12/09, <http://www.coha.org/the-us-and-cuba-an-environmental-duo/)//TL>

•Cuba’s abundant natural resources need to be protected with heightened vigilance ¶ •Lifting the trade embargo would open up the possibility for a constructive partnership between Cuba and the U.S. by developing compatible and sustainable environmental policies¶ •With the support of the U.S., Cuba could become a model for sustainable preservation and environmental protection on a global scale ¶ Through accidents of geography and history, Cuba is a priceless ecological resource. The United States should capitalize on its proximity to this resource-rich island nation by moving to normalize relations and establishing a framework for environmental cooperation and joint initiatives throughout the Americas. Cuba is the most biologically diverse of all the Caribbean Islands. Since it lies just 90 miles south of the Florida Keys, where the Atlantic, the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico intersect, the U.S. could play a key role in environmental conservation as well as the region in general. However, when it comes to environmental preservation, the Obama administration is obstructing progress and hindering any meaningful cooperation with its current U.S.- Cuba policy. ¶ Climate change and environmental degradation are two of the most pressing contemporary issues. If President Obama is sincerely committed to environmental sustainability, he must forge international partnerships to implement this objective. Where better to begin than in the U.S.’s own backyard, where Cuba has a huge presence. Only then can Cuba and the United States move forward to find joint solutions to environmental challenges. ¶ Environmental Riches and Implications ¶ Cuba’s glittering white sand beaches, extensive coral reefs, endemic fauna and diverse populations of fish compose the Caribbean’s most biologically diverse island. Based on a per hectare sampling when compared to the U.S. plus Canada, Cuba has 12 times more mammal species, 29 times as many amphibian and reptile species, 39 times more bird species, and 27 times as many vascular plant species. Equally important, adjacent ocean currents and the island nation’s close proximity, carry fish larvae into U.S. waters, making protection of Cuba’s coastal ecosystems vital to replenishing the U.S.’s ailing fisheries. Therefore, preserving the marine resources of Cuba is critical to the economic health of North America’s Atlantic coastal communities. ¶ The U.S. and Cuba also share an ancient deepwater coral system that stretches up to North Carolina. The island’s 4,200 islets and keys support important commercial reef fish species such as snapper and grouper as well as other marine life including sea turtles, dolphins and manatees in both countries. Fifty percent of its flora and 41 percent of its fauna are endemic, signifying the importance of protecting the island’s resources in order to safeguard the paradisiacal vision that Christopher Columbus observed when landing on the island in 1492. ¶ Oro Negro and Dinero ¶ The recent discovery of oil and natural gas reserves in the Florida straits in Cuban waters has attracted foreign oil exploration from China and India, both eager to begin extraction. Offshore oil and gas development could threaten Cuba’s and Florida’s environmental riches. Together, Cuba and the U.S. can develop policies to combat the negative results coming from the exploitation of these resources. The increased extraction and refining of oil in Cuba could have detrimental effects on the environment. Offshore drilling is likely to increase with the discovery of petroleum deposits in the Bay of Cárdenas and related areas. Excavation increases the possibility of oil spills, which would in turn destroy the surrounding ecosystem, including fisheries and coral reef formations. The amount of pollutants released into the air from refining crude oil and the amount of wayward oil residuals would also increase with drilling and extraction. Those conversant with the very sensitive habitat issues are calling for immediate consultations aimed at anticipating what should be done. ¶ However the U.S.’s enormous oil usage and its development requirements will cultivate economic growth on the island. Washington must work with Cuba to create an ecological protection plan not only to establish an environmentally friendly public image, but to make it a reality as well. Degradation of the environment will deprive Cuba, in the long run, of one of its most important sources of present and future revenue: tourism. Consequently, it is in the mutual interests of the U.S. and Cuba to develop a cooperative relationship that will foster tourism and growth in a sustainable manner. ¶ Sustainability through Collaboration ¶ In many parts of the country communism has inadequately acted as a seal to preserve elements of Cuba’s past as the centralized government prohibited private development by not giving special permission. A number of tourist resorts already dot the island, but Cuba has been largely exempt from mass tourist exploitation due to frozen relations with the U.S. Although the island remains underdeveloped, Fidel Castro has used his unchecked power to back policies, which have been heedless to environmental considerations, thus damaging some of the island’s pristine ecosystem that once defined the island. Roughly the size of Pennsylvania, Cuba is the largest Caribbean island, and if preservation and conservation measures are planned and carried out in a cognizant manner, it could become a paradigm for sustainable development at the global level. ¶ The Obama administration’s recent easing of travel restrictions on Cuban Americans visiting relatives on the island could be of immense importance not only to Cuban families, but also to the preservation of Cuba’s unique and increasingly threatened coastal and marine environments. Such a concession on Washington’s part would mark a small, but still significant stride in U.S.-Cuba relations, yet the travel restrictions still remain inherently discriminatory. The preposterous regulations that allow only a certain category of Americans into Cuba signify only a meager shift in U.S. policy towards Cuba. ¶ The 50-year-old U.S. embargo against the island has resoundingly failed to achieve its purpose. Obama’s modifications fall short of what it will take to reestablish a constructive U.S.-Cuba relationship. Cuba’s tropical forests, soils, and maritime areas have suffered degradation as a result of harmful policies stemming from a Soviet-style economic system. Cuba’s economy could be reinvigorated through expanded tourism, development initiatives and an expansion of commodity exports, including sugarcane for ethanol. U.S. policy toward Cuba should encourage environmental factors, thereby strengthening U.S. credibility throughout the hemisphere. ¶ An environmental partnership between the U.S. and Cuba is not only possible, but could result in development models that could serve as an example for environmental strategies throughout the Americas. The U.S. has the economic resources necessary to aid Cuba in developing effective policy, while the island provides the space where sustainable systems can be implemented initially instead of being applied after the fact. Cuba’s extreme lack of development provides an unspoiled arena for the execution of exemplary sustainable environmental protection practices.

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**Reps don’t shape reality – it’s objective**

**Kocher, 00** – Robert L., author, engineer working in the area of solid-state physics, and has done graduate study in clinical psychology (“Discourse on Reality and Sanity Part 1: What is Reality?” The Laissez Faire City Times, Vol. 4, No. 46, 11/13/00, http://web.archive.org/web/20040805084149/http://freedom.orlingrabbe.com/lfetimes/reality\_sanity1.htm)RK

The human senses seem remarkably able to discern a consistent and lawful reality. In the normal human being, mind and perception become so intimately connected as to produce a sense of unity with the world around us. This connection and sense of unity can be psychologically broken or regressed to primitive non-integrated levels through psychological trauma or regression, or through organic physical malfunction. For those who are in a normal functioning condition, behold, reality is all around you if you have courage to face it. Can I prove proof exists? No, I cannot. Not in the purely verbal world. Can I prove reality exists? No, not in the purely verbal world. Some things are too basic to be proven and must be accepted in day to day life. But in the purely verbal world, all things become philosophically doubtful when traced down to their primary premise, and that premise is then questioned. The World of Words While it is not possible to establish many proofs in the verbal world, and it is simultaneously possible to make many uninhibited assertions or word equations in the verbal world, it should be considered that reality is more rigid and does not abide by the artificial flexibility and latitude of the verbal world. The world of words and the world of human experience are very imperfectly correlated. That is, saying something doesn't make it true. A verbal statement in the world of words doesn't mean it will occur as such in the world of consistent human experience I call reality. In the event verbal statements or assertions disagree with consistent human experience, what proof is there that the concoctions created in the world of words should take precedence or be assumed a greater truth than the world of human physical experience that I define as reality? In the event following a verbal assertion in the verbal world produces pain or catastrophe in the world of human physical reality or experience, which of the two can and should be changed? Is it wiser to live with the pain and catastrophe, or to change the arbitrary collection of words whose direction produced that pain and catastrophe? Which do you want to live with? What proven reason is there to assume that when doubtfulness that can be constructed in verbal equations conflicts with human physical experience, human physical experience should be considered doubtful? It becomes a matter of choice and pride in intellectual argument. My personal advice is that when verbal contortions lead to chronic confusion and difficulty, better you should stop the verbal contortions rather than continuing to expect the difficulty to change. Again, it's a matter of choice. Philosophy is much like particle physics. Earlier in the 20th century the fundamental components of physical existence were considered to be the proton, the neutron, and the electron. As science developed atom smashers, and then more powerful atom smashers, these particles could be hit together and broken pieces of these components were found which might be assumed to be possible building blocks of the three primary particles. Well then, what are those building blocks made of? As more elaborate smashers are built and more discerning detection equipment is developed, perhaps still more kind of fragments or subparticles will be found. At some point in the process we will conclude that there is a material of some kind making up matter that just IS. It simply exists. Suppose the ultimate particle is found. The conclusion will be that it simply exists. There is no other conclusion possible or available. All systems of philosophy, of science, of religious theology, eventually can be traced down to one ultimate premise. There is something that exists. It exists, and that's all we know. Existence and reality exist. If an ultimate subparticulate material is found, in the world of chemistry, medicine, biology, engineering, and climbing stepladders; electrons, protons, and neutrons will still probably turn out to be the primary determining factors to be concerned about. That ignores some types of stuff like subparticle based propulsion system for future space ships or something similar in a highly specialized area. Philosophical questioning has long-since reached that parallel point of the ultimate particle or building material that just IS. There is something existent that just IS and will need to be accepted as being and following a consistent pattern of lawfulness. The fact is, the questions about proving whether reality exists, and proving proof exists are, or should be, meaningless to me beyond some degree of curiosity. I go on about my life without being able to prove proof or life exists. I can go on about my life without proving reality exists. The arguments asserted one way or another do not change how I need to live my life. Reality; A is A; what is, is; are equivalent to the protons, neutrons, and electrons of chemistry that must be accepted. Does the outcome of the philosophical question of whether reality or proof exists decide whether we should plant crops or wear clothes in cold weather to protect us from freezing? Har! Are you crazy? How many committed deconstructionist philosophers walk about naked in subzero temperatures or don't eat? Try creating and living in an alternative subjective reality where food is not needed and where you can sit naked on icebergs, and find out what happens. I emphatically encourage people to try it with the stipulation that they don't do it around me, that they don't force me to do it with them, or that they don't come to me complaining about the consequences and demanding to conscript me into paying for the cost of treating frostbite or other consequences. (sounds like there is a parallel to irresponsibility and socialism somewhere in here, doesn't it?). I encourage people to live subjective reality. I also ask them to go off far away from me to try it, where I won't be bothered by them or the consequences.

**Changing discourse doesn’t eliminate security dilemmas**

**Copeland, 2k** (Dale, professor of government at University of Virginia, International Security 25:2, Fall 2000, ingenta)

Although the road ahead for Wendt’s neoconstructivism is still long, Social Theory of International Politics provides a solid constructivist vehicle for traveling it. The book allows scholars to differentiate clearly between truly material and ideational explanations, and between accounts that emphasize the role of states as actors and those that incorporate transnational forces and divisions within polities. It has reinforced the importance of diplomacy as a tool for reducing high levels of misunderstanding that can impede cooperation. Yet by bracketing off domestic processes, Wendt has overlooked the irony of constructivism: that the mutability of human ideational structures at the domestic level reinforces leaders’ great uncertainty about future intentions at the interstate level. The security dilemma, with all its implications, is real and pervasive. It cannot be talked away through better discursive practices. It must be faced.

**It’s a statement of intent with no guidelines for praxis**

Jones, 99(Richard, professor of International Politics at the University of Wales, Security, Strategy, and Critical Theory, CIAO Net)

Because emancipatory political practice is central to the claims of critical theory, one might expect that proponents of a critical approach to the study of international relations would be reflexive about the relationship between theory and practice. Yet their thinking on this issue thus far does not seem to have progressed much beyond **grandiose statements of intent**. There have been no systematic considerations of how critical international theory can help generate, support, or sustain emancipatory politics beyond the seminar room or conference hotel. Robert Cox, for example, has described the task of critical theorists as providing “a guide to strategic action for bringing about an alternative order” (R. Cox 1981: 130). Although he has also gone on to identify possible agents for change and has outlined the nature and structure of some feasible alternative orders, he has not explicitly indicated whom he regards as the addressee of critical theory (i.e., who is being guided) and thus how the theory can hope to become a part of the political process (see R. Cox 1981, 1983, 1996). Similarly, Andrew Linklater has argued that “a critical theory of international relations must regard the practical project of extending community beyond the nation–state as its most important problem” (Linklater 1990b: 171). However, he has little to say about the role of theory in the realization of this “practical project.” Indeed, his main point is to suggest that the role of critical theory “is not to offer instructions on how to act but to reveal the existence of unrealised possibilities” (Linklater 1990b: 172). But the question still remains, reveal to whom? Is the audience enlightened politicians? Particular social classes? Particular social movements? Or particular (and presumably particularized) communities? In light of Linklater’s primary concern with emancipation, one might expect more guidance as to whom he believes might do the emancipating and how critical theory can impinge upon the emancipatory process. There is, likewise, little enlightenment to be gleaned from Mark Hoffman’s otherwise important contribution. He argues that critical international theory seeks not simply to reproduce society via description, but to understand society and change it. It is both descriptive and constructive in its theoretical intent: it is both an intellectual and a social act. It is not merely an expression of the concrete realities of the historical situation, but also a force for change within those conditions. (M. Hoffman 1987: 233) Despite this very ambitious declaration, once again, Hoffman gives no suggestion as to how this “force for change” should be operationalized and what concrete role critical theorizing might play in changing society. Thus, although the critical international theorists’ critique of the role that more conventional approaches to the study of world politics play in reproducing the contemporary world order may be persuasive, their account of the relationship between their own work and emancipatory political practice is unconvincing. Given the centrality of practice to the claims of critical theory, this is a very significant weakness. Without some plausible account of the **mechanisms** by which they hope to aid in the achievement of their emancipatory goals, proponents of critical international theory are hardly in a position to justify the assertion that “it represents the next stage in the development of International Relations theory” (M. Hoffman 1987: 244). Indeed, without a more convincing conceptualization of the theory–practice nexus, one can argue that critical international theory, by its own terms, has no way of redeeming some of its central epistemological and methodological claims and thus that it is a **fatally flawed** enterprise.

**Our threats are not constructed and you should err toward caution—no self-fulfilling prophecy**

**Schweller 4** [Randall, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Ohio State University, “Unanswered Threats A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing,” International Security 29.2 159-201, Muse]

Despite the historical frequency of underbalancing, little has been written on the subject. Indeed, Geoffrey Blainey's memorable observation that for "every thousand pages published on the causes of wars there is less than one page directly on the causes of peace" could have been made with equal veracity about overreactions to threats as opposed to underreactions to them.92 Library shelves are filled with books on the causes and dangers of exaggerating threats, ranging from studies of domestic politics to bureaucratic politics, to political psychology, to organization theory. By comparison, there have been few studies at any level of analysis or from any theoretical perspective that directly explain why states have with some, if not equal, regularity underestimated dangers to their survival. There may be some cognitive or normative bias at work here. Consider, for instance, that there is a commonly used word, paranoia, for the unwarranted fear that people are, in some way, "out to get you" or are planning to do oneharm. I suspect that just as many people are afflicted with the opposite psychosis: the delusion that everyone loves you when, in fact, they do not even like you. Yet, we do not have a familiar word for this phenomenon. Indeed, I am unaware of any word that describes this pathology (hubris and overconfidence come close, but they plainly define something other than what I have described). That noted, international relations theory does have a frequently used phrase for the pathology of states' underestimation of threats to their survival, the so-called Munich analogy. The term is used, however, in a disparaging way by theorists to ridicule those who employ it. The central claim is that the naïveté associated with Munich and the outbreak of World War II has become an overused and inappropriate analogy because few leaders are as evil and unappeasable as Adolf Hitler. Thus, the analogy either mistakenly causes leaders [End Page 198] to adopt hawkish and overly competitive policies or is deliberately used by leaders to justify such policies and mislead the public. A more compelling explanation for the paucity of studies on underreactions to threats, however, is the tendency of theories to reflect contemporary issues as well as the desire of theorists and journals to provide society with policy- relevant theories that may help resolve or manage urgent security problems. Thus, born in the atomic age with its new balance of terror and an ongoing Cold War, the field of security studies has naturally produced theories of and prescriptions for national security that have had little to say about—and are, in fact, heavily biased against warnings of—the dangers of underreacting to or underestimating threats. After all, the nuclear revolution was not about overkill but, as Thomas Schelling pointed out, speed of kill and mutual kill.93 Given the apocalyptic consequences of miscalculation, accidents, or inadvertent nuclear war, small wonder that theorists were more concerned about overreacting to threats than underresponding to them. At a time when all of humankind could be wiped out in less than twenty-five minutes, theorists may be excused for stressing the benefits of caution under conditions of uncertainty and erring on the side of inferring from ambiguous actions overly benign assessments of the opponent's intentions. The overwhelming fear was that a crisis "might unleash forces of an essentially military nature that overwhelm the political process and bring on a war thatnobody wants. Many important conclusions about the risk of nuclear war, and thus about the political meaning of nuclear forces, rest on this fundamental idea."94 Now that the Cold War is over, we can begin to redress these biases in the literature. In that spirit, I have offered a domestic politics model to explain why threatened states often fail to adjust in a prudent and coherent way to dangerous changes in their strategic environment. The model fits nicely with recent realist studies on imperial under- and overstretch. Specifically, it is consistent with Fareed Zakaria's analysis of U.S. foreign policy from 1865 to 1889, when, he claims, the United States had the national power and opportunity to expand but failed to do so because it lacked sufficient state power (i.e., the state was weak relative to society).95 Zakaria claims that the United States did [End Page 199] not take advantage of opportunities in its environment to expand because it lacked the institutional state strength to harness resources from society that were needed to do so. I am making a similar argument with respect to balancing rather than expansion: incoherent, fragmented states are unwilling and unable to balance against potentially dangerous threats because elites view the domestic risks as too high, and they are unable to mobilize the required resources from a divided society. The arguments presented here also suggest that elite fragmentation and disagreement within a competitive political process, which Jack Snyder cites as an explanation for overexpansionist policies, are more likely to produce underbalancing than overbalancing behavior among threatened incoherent states.96 This is because a balancing strategy carries certain political costs and risks with few, if any, compensating short-term political gains, and because the strategic environment is always somewhat uncertain. Consequently, logrolling among fragmented elites within threatened states is more likely to generate overly cautious responses to threats than overreactions to them. This dynamic captures the underreaction of democratic states to the rise of Nazi Germany during the interwar period.97 In addition to elite fragmentation, I have suggested some basic domestic-level variables that regularly intervene to thwart balance of power predictions.

**Threat construction is good – it allows us to anticipate and prevent danger**

**Berke 98-** Joseph Berke, Found. And Dir. Arbours Crisis Centre, 1998, Even Paranoids Have Enemies, p. 5-6

Internal and external persecution come together in the theoretical model of ‘the paranoid process’ – a set of developmental and defensive mechanisms which serve to delineate the individual’s inner psychic world and his experience of his emerging self, while, at the same time, contributing to the shaping of his sense of significant objects in his experiential world (Meissner 1986). One of this model’s core components, ‘the paranoid construction’ refers to a cognitive reorganization taking place in an attempt to sustain a comfortable sense of self which, however, may be at the expense of reality testing. This process, in its extreme form, leads to the formation of a persecutory bond, where a link is established between, on the one hand, the paranoid individual and, on the other, his persecutors and the terrifying forces that threaten to engulf him. This can become a rigid construction that reinforces the spiral of paranoia-persecution-paranoia. Meissner understands this mechanism as offering a sense of cohesion and durability to a fragile self, though it often involves a high degree of pathology and victimization. Instances of this process abound in individuals, institutions, and groups (including whole nations) where views of internal and external situations are (ab)used to service a brittle sense of identity. Fully recognizing this predicament, and the dangers involved, requires thinking about and tolerating our own conflictual parts. Paradoxically, **a certain degree of paranoia is desirable as it is a basis for discrimination** (Segal 1994); when we let a new experience touch us, we acknowledge that it may be bad or good, which enables us to anticipate danger. In leaders of an organization, for instance, a certain degree of paranoid potential can be a useful resource, as opposed to a dangerous naivety that would prevent the leader from becoming aware of the situations of activation of aggression in the group, or regression to primitive levels of functioning. Where the leader can be aware of, and apprehend risk and danger, there is the possibility of preparation for the group to face them and cope with them.

**No impact to security rhetoric**

**Abrahamsen 5** (Rita, Department of International Politics, University of Wales, Blair's Africa: The Politics of Securitization and Fear, Alternatives 30:1, AG)

The war on Iraq can be seen to demonstrate the willingness of the British government to engage in illiberal acts to defend the liberal values of the "international community," but it is important to note that the process of securitization does not automatically dictate such spectacular responses. As argued above, the process of securitization is gradual and incremental, and an issue can move along a continuum of risk/fear without ever reaching the stage of "existential threat" where it merits "emergency action" (as with Iraq). Instead, **most** security politics is concerned with the more mundane everyday management and containment of risk, and the securitization of Africa is thus entirely compatible with the feeble response to the brutal and prolonged conflict in the DRC or the Sudan. Rather than spectacular emergency politics or military action, securitization is **more likely** to give rise to policies of containment or policing.

**Rejection of securitization causes the state to become more interventionist—turns the K**

McCormack, ’10, is Lecturer in International Politics at the University of Leicester and has a PhD in International Relations from the University of Westminster. 2010, Tara (Critique, Security and Power: The political limits to emancipatory approaches, page 127-129)

The following section will briefly raise some questions about the rejection of the old security framework as it has been taken up by the most powerful institutions and states. Here we can begin to see the political limits to critical and emancipatory frameworks. In an international system which is marked by great power inequalities between states, the rejection of the old narrow national interest-based security framework by major international institutions, and the adoption of ostensibly emancipatory policies and policy rhetoric, has the consequence of problematising weak or unstable states and allowing international institutions or major states a more interventionary role, yet without establishing mechanisms by which the citizens of states being intervened in might have any control over the agents or agencies of their emancipation. Whatever the problems associated with the pluralist security framework **there were at least formal and clear demarcations**. This has the consequence of entrenching international power inequalities and allowing for a shift towards a hierarchical international order in which the citizens in weak or unstable states may arguably have even less freedom or power than before. Radical critics of contemporary security policies, such as human security and humanitarian intervention, argue that we see an assertion of Western power and the creation of liberal subjectivities in the developing world. For example, see Mark Duffield’s important and insightful contribution to the ongoing debates about contemporary international security and development. Duffield attempts to provide a coherent empirical engagement with, and theoretical explanation of, these shifts. Whilst these shifts, away from a focus on state security, and the so-called merging of security and development are often portrayed as positive and progressive shifts that have come about because of the end of the Cold War, Duffield argues convincingly that these shifts are highly problematic and unprogressive. For example, the rejection of sovereignty as formal international equality and a presumption of nonintervention has eroded the division between the international and domestic spheres and led to an international environment in which Western NGOs and powerful states have a major role in the governance of third world states. Whilst for supporters of humanitarian intervention this is a good development, Duffield points out the depoliticising implications, drawing on examples in Mozambique and Afghanistan. Duffield also draws out the problems of the retreat from modernisation that is represented by sustainable development. The Western world has moved away from the development policies of the Cold War, which aimed to develop third world states industrially. Duffield describes this in terms of a new division of human life into uninsured and insured life. Whilst we in the West are ‘insured’ – that is we no longer have to be entirely self-reliant, we have welfare systems, a modern division of labour and so on – sustainable development aims to teach populations in poor states how to survive in the absence of any of this. Third world populations must be taught to be self-reliant, they will remain uninsured. Self-reliance of course means the **condemnation of millions to** **a barbarous life of inhuman bare survival**. Ironically, although sustainable development is celebrated by many on the left today, by leaving people to fend for themselves rather than developing a society wide system which can support people, sustainable development actually leads to a less human and humane system than that developed in modern capitalist states. Duffield also describes how many of these problematic shifts are embodied in the contemporary concept of human security. For Duffield, we can understand these shifts in terms of Foucauldian biopolitical framework, which can be understood as a regulatory power that seeks to support life through intervening in the biological, social and economic processes that constitute a human population (2007: 16). Sustainable development and human security are for Duffield technologies of security which aim to *create* self-managing and self-reliant subjectivities in the third world, which can then survive in a situation of serious underdevelopment (or being uninsured as Duffield terms it) without causing security problems for the developed world. For Duffield this is all driven by a neoliberal project which seeks to control and manage uninsured populations globally. Radical critic Costas Douzinas (2007) also criticises new forms of cosmopolitanism such as human rights and interventions for human rights as a triumph of American hegemony. Whilst we are in agreement with critics such as Douzinas and Duffield that these new security frameworks cannot be empowering, and ultimately lead to more power for powerful states, we need to understand why these frameworks have the effect that they do. We can understand that these frameworks have political limitations without having to look for a specific plan on the part of current powerful states. In new security frameworks such as human security we can see the political limits of the framework proposed by critical and emancipatory theoretical approaches.

## china

**Chinese influence in Latin America is bad – U.S. economic engagement is comparatively superior**

**Shaiken et al., 13**

[Harley. Prof in the Center for Latin American Studies at UC-Berkeley. And Enrique Peters – Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Miami. And Adrian Hearn – Centro de Estudios China-Mexixo at Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico. China and the New Triangular Relationships in the Americas: China and the Future of US-Mexico Relations, 2013. Pg 7-8]

However, closer ties to China also have signifi­cant disadvantages for both Latin America and the United States:¶ Growing trade deficits. Latin American lead­ers who sign trade and investment deals with the PRC have noticed that China's exports are more affordable than their own goods, which contributes to trade deficits. Chinese goods are made by laborers who work for one-third of the wages of Latin American counterparts and who tolerate worse working conditions. Officials in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico have signaled their unease about trade with such a hot com­petitor. In September 2005, Mexican President Vicente Fox made it clear to visiting President Hu Jintao that dumping electronics and cloth­ing was unacceptable. For every dollar that Mexico makes from exports to China, the PRC makes $31 from exports to Mexico.[9]¶ Disinterest in economic reform. Some ana­lysts believe that the commodities-based trade model used by China will undermine the progress that Latin America has made toward industrialization. While countries like Chile and Brazil have moved beyond raw materials exports, others with powerful presidents or rul­ing oligarchies may be tempted to fall back on plantation economics. Income gaps between the rich and poor may widen as a result. More­over, such narrowly focused economies are vul­nerable to downturns in commodity prices. Some 44 percent of Latin Americans already live below the poverty line. If these countries fail to adopt reforms, social inequality and political instability could depress U.S. exports to the region and increase migration problems.¶ Scramble for resources. To obtain commodi­ties, China offers tempting investments in infra­structure. In contrast, the United States cannot offer direct tie-ins to state industries and can only offer development aid, now in decreasing amounts. Chinese competition may make Mil­lennium Challenge Account (MCA) money a less effective incentive to democratize govern­ments and liberalize markets. The one-to-two year lead time from proposal to disbursement of MCA aid gives volatile governments a chance to back away from market-oriented perfor­mance requirements.¶ Evasion of American-style bottleneck diplo­macy. China's flexibility counters more rigid U.S. approaches. Obtaining any kind of assistance from the United States requires compliance on a battery of restrictions, including observing human rights, protecting the environment, prom­ising not to send U.S. military personnel to the International Criminal Court (ICC),[10] not assist­ing current or former terrorists, and not using U.S.-provided equipment for any other than its stated purpose. American commitments also depend on legislative approval and can be reversed if the mood in the U.S. Congress shifts.¶ Prying eyes on America. From electronic espi­onage facilities in Cuba to port facilities run by Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-Shing's Hutchi­son-Whampoa conglomerate in Panama, China has an eye trained on the United States. U.S. intelligence agencies are aware of this, but Washington's penchant for focusing on one threat at a time, such as the war on terrorism, could leave America vulnerable to Chinese industrial and military espionage.

**Chinese influence in Cuba is declining – Xi is focused on Mexico**

**Economist, 13** – (“Why has China snubbed Cuba and Venezuela?”, The Economist, 6/6/13, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2013/06/economist-explains-3>) EK

XI JINPING'S first visit to Latin America and the Caribbean as China’s president, from May 31st to June 6th, took him tantalisingly close to Beijing’s strongest ideological allies in the region, Cuba and Venezuela. Yet he **steered clear of both of them**. Instead of visiting Cuba, as his predecessor Hu Jintao did on his first presidential trip to the region, Mr Xi stopped off in an English-speaking Caribbean nation, Trinidad and Tobago, which (as if to rub it in) is only a short hop from Caracas. He then travelled to Costa Rica and Mexico (pictured)—two countries that are at least as much a part of America’s orbit as Cuba and Venezuela are part of the “Beijing Consensus”. Why this snub to two friendly nations that have been lavished with Chinese largesse in recent years, especially at a time when both are struggling to come to terms with the death in March of Hugo Chávez, the Cuba- and China-loving Venezuelan leader?¶ The short answer is: for simplicity’s sake. Visits to Cuba and Venezuela might well have raised distracting questions when Mr Xi meets Barack Obama in Southern California on June 7th, and neither socialist government was likely to express publicly any offence at being left off the itinerary. The beauty of having a chequebook as thick as China’s is that if you give your friends the cold shoulder, you can always mollify them with money. That may be why, on June 6th, Venezuela’s oil minister announced that he had secured an extra $4 billion from China to drill for oil, in addition to $35 billion already provided by Beijing. Not quite in the same league, but significant nonetheless, the Havana Times reported this week that China was also planning to invest in Cuban golf courses, the island’s latest fad.¶ However, as our story on Mr Xi’s visit to Latin America points out, he may have had other reasons for picking the destinations that he did. Firstly, he may be trying to respond to Mr Obama’s “pivot” to Asia by showing that China is developing its own sphere of influence in America’s backyard. China’s business relationship with Latin America gets less attention than its dealings with Africa, but in terms of investment, it is much bigger. According to Enrique Dussel, a China expert at Mexico’s National Autonomous University, Latin America and the Caribbean were collectively the second largest recipient of Chinese foreign direct investment between 2000-2011, after Hong Kong. In terms of funding, Kevin Gallagher of Boston University says China has provided more loans to Latin America since 2005 than the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank combined. The visits to Mexico and Costa Rica may also represent a pivot of sorts in terms of the type of economic relationship China has with Latin America. Up until now, China has hoovered up the region’s commodities, importing soya, copper, iron, oil and other raw materials, particularly from Brazil, Chile and Venezuela, while flooding the region with its manufactured goods. But its relations with Mexico, a rival in low-cost manufacturing, have been frosty: China accounts for only about 0.05% of Mexican foreign direct investment, and it exports ten times as much to Mexico as it imports.¶ But as wages in China have increased and high energy prices have raised the cost of shipping goods from China to America, Beijing may be looking for bases such as Mexico and Costa Rica where it can relocate Chinese factories and benefit from free-trade agreements with the United States. This idea thrills the Mexican government, but does it pose an immediate threat to Venezuela and Cuba? Probably not: China will continue to need their staunch ideological support over issues like Taiwan, for one thing. But it does suggest that China’s economic interest in the region is broadening, especially along the Pacific coast. If that proves to be the case, **Cuba and Venezuela**, deprived of the charismatic Chávez to court Beijing on their behalf, **will have to work hard to stay relevant**.

**US influence in Latin America’s resilient and the thesis of the DA is wrong**

Duddy & Mora 5-1

[Patrick – US Ambassador to Venezuela until 2010 and Senior Lecturer at Duke. And Frank – Director of Latin American Center at Florida Intl University and former Assistant Secretary of Defense – Western Hemisphere (09-13). “Latin America: Is U.S. influence waning?” 5/1/13 http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/05/01/3375160/latin-america-is-us-influence.html#storylink=cpy]

As Moises Naim notes in his recent book, The End of Power, there has been an important change in power distribution in the world away from states toward an expanding and increasingly mobile set of actors that are dramatically shaping the nature and scope of global relationships. In Latin America, many of the most substantive and dynamic forms of engagement are occurring in a web of cross-national relationships involving small and large companies, people-to-people contact through student exchanges and social media, travel and migration.¶ Trade and investment remain the most enduring and measurable dimensions of U.S. relations with the region. It is certainly the case that our economic interests alone would justify more U.S. attention to the region. Many observers who worry about declining U.S. influence in this area point to the rise of trade with China and the presence of European companies and investors.¶ While it is true that other countries are important to the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean, it is also still true that the United States is by far the largest and most important economic partner of the region and trade is growing even with those countries with which we do not have free trade agreements.¶ An area of immense importance to regional economies that we often overlook is the exponential growth in travel, tourism and migration. It is commonplace to note the enormous presence of foreign students in the United States but in 2011, according to the Institute of International Education, after Europe, Latin America was the second most popular destination for U.S. university students. Hundreds of thousands of U.S. tourists travel every year to Latin America and the Caribbean helping to support thousands of jobs.¶ From 2006-2011 U.S. non-government organizations, such as churches, think tanks and universities increased the number of partnerships with their regional cohorts by a factor of four. Remittances to Latin America and the Caribbean from the United States totaled $64 billion in 2012. Particularly for the smaller economies of Central America and the Caribbean these flows can sometimes constitute more than 10 percent of gross domestic product.¶ Finally, one should not underestimate the resiliency of U.S. soft power in the region. The power of national reputation, popular culture, values and institutions continues to contribute to U.S. influence in ways that are difficult to measure and impossible to quantify. Example: Despite 14 years of strident anti-American rhetoric during the Chávez government, tens of thousand of Venezuelans apply for U.S. nonimmigrant visas every year, including many thousands of Chávez loyalists.¶ Does this mean we can feel comfortable relegating U.S. relations with the hemisphere to the second or third tier of our international concerns? Certainly not. We have real and proliferating interests in the region. As the president and his team head to Mexico and Costa Rica, it is important to recognize the importance of our ties to the region.¶ We have many individual national partners in the Americas. We don’t need a new template for relations with the hemisphere as a whole or another grand U.S.-Latin America strategy. A greater commitment to work more intensely with the individual countries on the issues most relevant to them would be appropriate. The United States still has the economic and cultural heft in the region to play a fundamental role and to advance its own interests.

## politics

**The budget, health care and immigration thump and Obama isn’t spending capital**

**Jalonick, 10/28/13** (Mary, “Congress eyes milk prices, politics in farm talks” Kansas City Star,

Read more here: <http://www.kansascity.com/2013/10/28/4581669/congress-eyes-milk-prices-politics.html#storylink=cpy>)

The farm bill, which sets policy for farm subsidies, the food stamps and other rural development projects, has moved slowly through Congress in the last two years as lawmakers have focused on higher-profile priorities, like budget negotiations, health care and immigration legislation.¶ But farm-state lawmakers are appealing to their colleagues to harken back to more bipartisan times and do something Congress hasn't done very much lately — pass a major piece of legislation.¶ Even President Barack Obama, who has been largely silent on the farm bill as it has wound through Congress, said as the government reopened earlier this month that the farm bill "would make a huge difference in our economy right now."

**Won’t pass – GOP obstructionism**

**Dumain, 10/31/13** (Emily, “Farm Bill Conference Faces Pre-Emptive Conservative Demands” Roll Call, <http://blogs.rollcall.com/218/farm-bill-conference-faces-pre-emptive-conservative-demands/>)

Farm bill conferees spent more than three hours on Wednesday promising to work with each to reauthorize crucial farm and food aid programs, but some House Republicans are already throwing up potential roadblocks to a House-Senate deal.¶ Midway through the first bipartisan, bicameral meeting of the conference committee, 27 House Republicans — led by Indiana GOP Rep. Marlin Stutzman — issued a press release calling on the conferees to retain the two-bill farm bill strategy, deployed when the chamber could not pass a comprehensive farm bill earlier this year with 218 GOP votes.¶ “As you know, for decades the reauthorization bills for farm policy and food stamp policy have combined together,” the members argued in the letter. “As a combined piece of legislation, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projected the Senate Farm Bill to cost nearly one trillion dollars over ten years — with an astonishing 80 percent of this spending going towards the food stamp program. This kind of ‘Farm Bill’ can hardly be called a Farm Bill at all.”¶ The move was heralded by outside conservative advocacy groups like Heritage Action for America and Club for Growth, which happily took credit for the defeat of the first farm bill in the House.¶ But it was also enormously controversial. No Democrats in the House supported the maneuver, which ultimately cut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or food stamps, by $40 billion as compared with the Senate’s reduction of just $4 billion.¶ And splitting farm programs from food stamps is almost certain to be a non-starter for Senate negotiators, who seemed to acknowledge as much Wednesday.¶ “The House is trying to break a decades-old bond between farms and those Americans who are hungry,” said farm bill conferee Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio.¶ “[Food assistance] has been a part of our farm bill since I started on it in the [1970s], and we’ve always reached agreements on this,” added conferee Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, a former Agriculture Committee chairman who, when he retires next year, will have worked on eight farm bills over his tenure on Capitol Hill.

**Capital not key – it’s behind closed doors in a conference committee run by House and Senate negotiators – and it won’t pass**

**Doering, 10/28/13** (Christopher, “Lawmakers to meet Wednesday on long-delayed farm bill” USA Today, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2013/10/28/farm-bill-conference-committee/3289135/>

WASHINGTON - House and Senate lawmakers responsible for writing a farm bill will gather publicly on Wednesday for the first time, a meeting expected to shed light on how quickly the conferees could strike a deal on the much-delayed legislation.¶ The 41 lawmakers are charged with merging farm bills passed this summer by the House and Senate into one piece of legislation, an arduous task highlighted by the $35 billion gap between the two sides on food stamp spending and the apparent reluctance of each side to budge from its position.¶ Top officials and staff from the Senate and House Agriculture committees already have met privately to work on a new five-year farm bill, which includes crop insurance, subsidies, conservation, public nutrition and food aid programs. The Wednesday conference, where lawmakers will make opening statements, could be the only gathering for the farm bill not held behind closed doors. By law, at least one meeting must be open to the public.¶ "People are going to be watching to see how the opening speeches go on Wednesday as to what kind of tone is set as to whether people are highlighting the differences or highlighting the places of commonality," said Pat Westhoff, director of the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute, a think tank at the University of Missouri. "That may be some indicator of just how eager everybody is to get to an agreement."

**No PC**

**Barnes, 11/4/13** – editor of the Weekly Standard (Fred, “The Point of No Return”, The Weekly Standard, <http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/point-no-return_764703.html>)

\*DHEIDT CUT THIS CARD FROM THE FUTURE

President Obama is facing the abyss. It’s that moment when a president’s plans are overwhelmed by his problems, and he’s relegated to playing defense for the rest of his White House term. Obama’s agenda already lingers near death. His poll numbers have slipped to new lows. His speeches are full of alibis and accusations.¶ Obama hasn’t reached the point of no return, but he’s close. His biggest problem is the collapse of Obamacare on its launching pad as the entire country watched. And there’s worse trouble ahead. More likely than not, Obamacare will be the dominant issue in the final three-plus years of his presidency. From that, there’s no recovery.¶ Years on defense—impotent years—have beset even the strongest of presidents. After the Iran-contra scandal broke in November 1986, the Reagan presidency was essentially over. He served two more years and made a triumphant trip to the Soviet Union, but his power was gone. The low point was the overturning of his veto of a highway bill.¶ Jimmy Carter’s presidency was hardly a powerhouse. Still, it had one shining moment, when the Camp David peace accord between Israel and Egypt was signed in September 1978. What clout Carter had vanished after the “malaise” speech in July 1979. It made him a target of ridicule. ¶ Impeachment in 1998 forced President Clinton into retreat. His popularity remained high, but he abandoned an agenda that included entitlement reform. Even an unexpected Democratic victory in the midterm elections in his second term couldn’t revive his presidency.¶ In George W. Bush’s case, problems in his second term quickly engulfed his administration. The Iraq war became a bloodbath, his plan for overhauling Social Security had few takers, and he was blamed, unfairly, for the incompetent response to Hurricane Katrina. A troop buildup and adoption of a counterinsurgency strategy saved Iraq from disaster, but otherwise Bush’s second term was marked by futility.¶ Now, with his presidency in peril, Obama seems unprepared to avert paralysis. The failed startup of Obamacare, its website a “joke” in the view of 60 percent of America in a Fox News poll, caught the president by surprise. He refused to acknowledge the magnitude of the problem, conceding only that healthcare.gov wasn’t working as “smoothly as it was supposed to.” Neither is his presidency.

**Lifting the Cuban embargo is key to US agricultural exports—solves the impact**

**EATON 2010** (Tim, “Texas rice farmers hope Cuba embargo ends,” Austin American Statesman, August 2, <http://www.statesman.com/news/news/state-regional-govt-politics/texas-rice-farmers-hope-cuba-embargo-ends-1/nRwjg/>)

Texas rice farmers, like the Wynns, are particularly well-positioned to take advantage of a policy change that would open up Cuba.¶ Some Texas rice farmers are barely profitable now, and they have said that trade with Cuba would allow for periods of consistent solvency.¶ For the past several years, many people in Texas rice country have been complaining about how difficult it has been to make any money. They said they see Cuba as a way to increase profits and allow them to continue growing rice for people in the U.S. and around the world.¶ Wynn said Cuba's hunger for rice is so great that the country could take every single grain of rice that Texas produces in its two harvests each year.¶ Texas produces about 475,000 tons of rice a year, and Cubans eat an estimated 800,000 tons of the white grain every year. Rice is one of the staples in Cubans' diet, making the country the biggest consumer of rice in the Caribbean region.¶ Dan Gertson, a neighbor by country standards of the Wynns', has been one of the area's most vocal proponents of trade with Cuba.¶ Such trade would help farmers maintain or increase the amount of rice-growing acres in Texas, Gertson said from his office in the shadows of his towering grain bins.¶ There are now about 170,000 acres of rice farms in the state, and expanded trade with Cuba could lead to as much as 200,000 productive acres, he said.¶ Conversely, if Cuban trade remains limited, then the industry will continue to suffer and shrink as farmers close down their operations, Wynn said.

**Plan is politically popular and it’s perceived as a win – Cuba policy shift**

Hinderdael 11 M.A. candidate at SAIS Bologna Center, concentrating in American Foreign Policy and Energy, Resources, and Environment [Klaas Hinderdael, Breaking the Logjam: Obama's Cuba Policy and a Guideline for Improved Leadership, by <http://bcjournal.org/volume-14/breaking-the-logjam.html?printerFriendly=true>]

Political Implications¶ In the wake of a markedly diminished strategic threat from the Cuban island after the end of the Cold War, domestic political goals trumped other goals in terms of setting Cuba policy, particularly during election years. Nonetheless, legislative momentum for engaging Cuba has picked up decidedly, even as some presidents have lagged behind. This momentum has coincided with a slow shift in public opinion and demographics that make ending the embargo and engaging Cuba popular amongst both the majority of American voters, as well as the majority of the Cuban-American constituency.¶ Two events in the late 1990s have often been pointed to as significant turning points in the political views and weight of Cuban-American voters. First, many traveled to Cuba for the 1998 papal visit, and embraced Pope John Paul II’s call for “Cuba to open to the world, and the world to open to Cuba.”40 then, two years later, the Elián González episode of 2000 allowed for a shift dubbed by Daniel Erikson the “Elián meets the China syndrome.”41 With the majority of Americans calling for Elián to be reunited with his father in Cuba, a position that anti-Castro Cuban-Americans opposed vehemently, the Cuban-American community, by taking such a hard-line stance, lost some of its legitimacy in the American political system. Furthermore, a harsh Cuba policy stood in stark contrast to a simultaneous broadening of America’s economic and diplomatic ties with China.¶ Polls over the last decade have revealed the dramatic shift in the views of Cuban-Americans. They indicate that, while in 1997, only 22 percent of Miami-Dade County Cuban-Americans favored ending the embargo, by 2004, that percentage had risen to 34 percent, and by December 2008 to 55 percent (in 2008, 65 percent also supported ending restrictions on travel and remittances).42 these statistics indicate that Obama’s positions in the run-up to the 2008 presidential election may not have been such a bad political strategy after all. Furthermore, we should expect to see politicians increasingly catering to these beliefs as they continue to gain political expediency.¶ Perhaps more significantly, Americans on both sides of the political spectrum support significant changes in Cuba policy, from relaxing travel and remittance restrictions to opening up diplomatic relations. They also believe that the island provides little threat to the United States, and that engagement is the most likely policy to lead Cuba towards democratic reform. An April 2009 World Public opinion poll drew the following conclusions from republican (r) and Democrat (D) pollsters:43¶ In terms of the US embargo policy, just days before the World Public opinion poll was released, separate Gallup and ABC polls showed that approximately 55 percent of Americans believe the embargo should be ended, with 35 percent believing it should be continued, and the rest unsure.44 Due to such strong public support for a shift in Cuba policy, the risks of making a drastic shift in the country’s Cuba policies are decreasing rapidly. Leaders willing to promote such a transformation stand to reap significant political gains.¶ A steady demographical shift in the Cuban-American population also makes such a stance politically pragmatic. As experts have noted, first generation Cuban-Americans, traditionally more linked to Cuba policy hardliners, “are retreating from the political stage, if for no reason other than age.”45 In contrast, later-generation immigrants are no longer single-issue voters, made particularly evident during the 2008 election, as the majority of Cuban-American voters agreed with Obama’s Cuba policy, but still voted for Senator John McCain.¶ In fact, Florida International University (FIU) polls show that on a variety of issues, including ending restrictions on remittances and travel, ending the embargo, and reestablishing diplomatic relations, there is a 15 to 20 percent hike in support for these policies among those who immigrated between 1980 and 1998, as opposed to earlier immigrants. There is an additional increase of 5 percent for those who came to America after 1998.46 Clearly, as these demographics continue to provide rising support for engagement and ending the embargo, politicians should and will attempt to shift Cuba policy accordingly.¶ Nonetheless, while the above views do provide increasing political clout, one cannot discard the historical significance of election year Florida politics. During his campaign, President Bush repeatedly condemned the June 2000 seizure of Elián González and made it clear that “he intended to confront [Fidel] Castro.”47 Harsh anti-Castro rhetoric ultimately helped Bush win the election, as he won 80 percent of the Cuban-American vote and the state of Florida by only 537 votes.48¶ In the aftermath of the 2000 presidential election, it is inevitable that candidates continue to fear alienating a strong voting bloc in a key swing state. Similarly, republican campaign finance money going into Democratic coffers bolsters the status quo and prevents policy modifications.49 Florida can still determine an election, but candidates should note the weakening correlation between the voting patterns of Cuban-Americans and the Cuba policies touted by politicians, as well as the demographical changes that have taken place since 2000.¶ Ultimately, public support amongst Americans as a whole, as well as Cuban-Americans in particular, shows that pragmatism is winning, and that the majority prefers engagement over isolation. More recently, Raúl’s reforms are also providing domestic momentum for a transformation of US-Cuba policy. Forward-looking American leaders will see these shifts and take advantage of the political gains that they provide by ending the embargo and normalizing relations with Cuba.